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WORKS

Of the REVEREND

WILLIAM LAW, A.M.

VOL. VII.

CONTAINING

I. The Spirit of Prayer; or, the Soul Rising out of the Vanity of Time, into the Riches of Eternity. In Two Parts.

II. The Way to Divine Knowledge; being several Dialogues between Humanus, Academicus, Rusticus, and Theophilus.

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THE

Spirit of PRAYER:

OR,

The SOUL Rising out of the VANITY of TIME INTO THE RICHES of ETERNITY.

In TWO PARTS.

PART the FIRST.

By *WILLIAM LAW*, M. A.

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CHAP. I.

Treating of ſome Matters preparatory to the Spirit *of Prayer.*

THE greateſt Part of Mankind, nay of Chriſtians, may be ſaid to be aſleep; and that particular Way of Life which takes up each Man's Mind, Thoughts, and Actions, may be very well called his particular Dream. This Degree of Vanity is equally viſible in every Form and Order of Life. The Learned and the Ignorant, the Rich and the Poor, are all in the ſame State of Slumber, only paſſing away a ſhort Life in a different kind of Dream. But why ſo? It is becauſe Man has an Eternity within him, is born into this World, not for the ſake of living here, not for any Thing this World can give him, but only to have Time and Place, to become either an eternal Partaker of a divine Life with GOD, or to have an helliſh Eternity among fallen Angels:

And therefore, every Man who has not his Eye, his Heart, and his Hands, continually governed by this twofold Eternity, may be juſtly ſaid to be faſt aſleep, to have no awakened Senſibility of Himſelf. And a Life devoted to the Intereſts and Enjoyments of this World, ſpent and waſted in the Slavery of earthly Deſires, may be truly called a Dream, as having all the Shortneſs, Vanity, and Deluſion of a Dream; only with this great Difference, that when a Dream is over, nothing is loſt but Fictions and Fancies; but when the Dream of Life is ended *only* by Death, all that Eternity is loſt for which we were brought into Being. Now there is no Miſery in this World, nothing that makes either the Life or Death of Man to be full of Calamity, but this Blindneſs and Inſenſibility of his State, into which he ſo willingly, nay obſtinately plunges himſelf. Every Thing that has the Nature of Evil and Diſtreſs in it takes its Riſe from hence. Do but ſuppoſe a Man to know himſelf, that he comes into this World on no other Errand, but to riſe out of the Vanity of Time into the Riches of Eternity; do but ſuppoſe him to govern his inward Thoughts and outward Actions by this View of himſelf, and then to him every Day has loſt all its Evil; Proſperity and Adverſity

have

have no Difference, becauſe he receives and uſes them both in the ſame Spirit; Life and Death are equally welcome, becauſe equally Parts of his Way to Eternity. For poor and miſerable as this Life is, we have all of us free Acceſs to all that is Great, and Good, and Happy, and carry within ourſelves a *Key* to all the Treaſures that Heaven has to beſtow upon us.—We ſtarve in the midſt of Plenty, groan under Infirmities, with the Remedy in our own Hand; live and die without knowing and feeling any Thing of the *One, only Good*, whilſt we have it in our Power to know and enjoy it in as great a Reality, as we know and feel the Power of this World over us: For Heaven is as near to our Souls, as this World is to our Bodies; and we are created, we are redeemed, to have our Converſation in it. GOD, the only *Good* of all intelligent Natures, is not an abſent or diſtant GOD, but is more preſent *in* and *to* our Souls, than our own Bodies; and we are Strangers to Heaven, and without GOD in the World, for this only Reaſon, becauſe we are void of that Spirit of Prayer, which alone can, and never fails to unite us with the *One*, *only* Good, and to open Heaven and the Kingdom of GOD within us. A Root ſet in the fineſt Soil, in the beſt Climate, and bleſſed with all that Sun, and Air,

and Rain can do for it, is not in ſo ſure a Way of its Growth to Perfection, as every Man may be, whoſe Spirit aſpires after all that which GOD is ready, and infinitely deſirous to give him. For the *Sun* meets not the ſpringing Bud that ſtretches towards him with half that Certainty, as GOD, the Source of all Good, communicates himſelf to the Soul that longs to partake of Him.

We are all of us, by Birth, the Offſpring of GOD, more nearly related to him than we are to one another; for *in him we live, and move, and have our Being.* The firſt Man that was brought forth from GOD had the Breath and Spirit of *Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt*, breathed into him, and ſo he became a living Soul. Thus was our firſt Father born of GOD, deſcended from Him, and ſtood in Paradiſe in the Image and Likeneſs of GOD. He was the Image and Likeneſs of God, not with any Regard to his outward Shape or Form, for no Shape has any Likeneſs to God; but he was in the Image and Likeneſs of GOD, becauſe the Holy Trinity had breathed their own Nature and Spirit into him. And as the Deity, *Father, Son,* and *Holy Spirit,* are always in Heaven, and make Heaven to be every where, ſo this Spirit, breathed by them into Man, brought Heaven into Man along with it; and

ſo

ſo Man was in Heaven, as well as on Earth, that is, in Paradiſe, which ſignifies an heavenly State, or Birth of Life *.

Adam had all that Divine Nature, both as to an heavenly *Spirit*, and heavenly *Body*, which the Angels have: But as he was brought forth to be a Lord and Ruler of a new World, created out of the *Chaos* or *Ruins* of the Kingdom of fallen Angels; ſo it was neceſſary that he ſhould alſo have the Nature of this new created World in himſelf, both as to its *Spirit* and *Materiality*. Hence it was, that he had a Body taken from this new created Earth, not ſuch dead Earth as we now make *Bricks* of, but the *bleſſed* Earth of Paradiſe, that had the Powers of Heaven in it, out of which the *Tree of Life* itſelf could grow. Into the Noſtrils of this outward Body was the Breath or *Spirit* of this World breathed; and in this Spirit and Body of this World did the inward celeſtial Spirit and Body of *Adam* dwell: It was the *Medium* or *Means* through which he was to have Commerce with this World, become viſible to its Creatures, and rule over it and them. Thus ſtood our firſt Father; an Angel both as to Body and Spirit (as he will be again after the Reſurrection) yet dwelling in a Body and Spirit taken from this new created World, which however was as inferior

* Spirit of Prayer, Part the Second, Page 61.

to him, as subject to him, as the Earth and all its Creatures were. It was no more alive in him, no more brought forth its Nature within him, than *Satan* and the Serpent were alive in him at his first Creation. And herein lay the Ground of *Adam*'s Ignorance of Good and Evil; it was because his outward Body and the outward World (in which alone were Good and Evil) could not discover their own Nature, or open their own Life within him, but were kept inactive by the Power and Life of the celestial Man within it. And this was Man's first and great Trial; a Trial, not imposed upon him by the mere Will of God, or by Way of Experiment; but a Trial necessarily implied in the Nature of his State: He was created an Angel, both as to Body and Spirit; and this Angel stood in an outward Body, of the Nature of the outward World; and therefore, by the Nature of his State, he had his Trial, or *Power* of choosing, whether he would live as an Angel, using only his outward Body as a means of opening the Wonders of the outward World to the Glory of his Creator; or whether he would turn his Desire to the opening of the bestial Life of the outward World in himself, for the Sake of *knowing the Good and Evil* that were in it. The Fact is certain, that he lusted after the Knowledge

ledge of this Good and Evil, and made uſe of the Means to obtain it. No ſooner had he got this Knowledge, by the opening the beſtial Life and Senſibility within him, but in that Day, nay, in that Inſtant, *he died*; that is, his heavenly Spirit with its heavenly Body were both extinguiſhed in him; but his Soul, an immortal Fire that could not die, became a poor Slave in Priſon of beſtial Fleſh and Blood. See here the Nature and Neceſſity of our Redemption; it is to redeem the firſt Angelic Nature that departed from *Adam*; it is to make that heavenly Spirit and Body which *Adam* loſt, to be alive again in all the human Nature; and this is called *Regeneration*. See alſo the true Reaſon why only the *Son*, or *Eternal Word* of GOD, could be our Redeemer; it is becauſe He alone, by whom all Things were at firſt made, could be able to bring to Life again that celeſtial Spirit and Body which had departed from *Adam*. See alſo why our bleſſed Redeemer ſaid, *Except a Man be born again, of Water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*. He muſt be born again of the *Spirit*, becauſe *Adam*'s firſt heavenly *Spirit* was loſt; He muſt be born again of *Water*, becauſe that heavenly Body which *Adam* loſt, was formed out of the heavenly Materiality, which is called *Water*.

Thus

Thus in the *Revelation* of St. *John*, the heavenly Materiality, out of which the Bodies of the Angels and alſo of *Adam* were formed, is called a *glaſſy Sea*, as being the neareſt and trueſt Repreſentation of it that can be made to our Minds. The Neceſſity of our regaining our firſt heavenly Body, is the Neceſſity of our eating the Body and Blood of CHRIST. The Neceſſity of having again our firſt heavenly Spirit, is declared by the Neceſſity of our being baptized by the Holy Ghoſt. Our *Fall* is nothing elſe, but the Falling of our Soul from this celeſtial Body and Spirit into a *beſtial* Body and Spirit of this World. Our riſing out of our fallen State, or Redemption, is nothing elſe but the regaining our firſt angelic Spirit and Body, which in Scripture is called our *inward*, or *new Man*, *created again in Chriſt Jeſus*. See here, laſtly, the true Ground of all the Mortifications of Fleſh and Blood, required in the Goſpel; it is becauſe this *beſtial Life* of this outward World ſhould not have been opened in Man; it is his Separation from GOD, and Death to the Kingdom of Heaven; and therefore, all its *Workings Appetites*, and *Deſires*, are to be reſtrained and kept under, that the firſt heavenly Life, to which *Adam* died, may have Room to riſe up in us.

But

But to return. That *Adam* was thus an Angel at his firſt Creation, dwelling in an outward Body and outward World, incapable of receiving any Impreſſions from them, and able to rule them at his Pleaſure; that all outward Nature was a State of Life *below* him, in Subjection to him; that neither Sun, nor Stars, nor Fire, nor Water, nor Earth, nor Stones, could act upon him, or hurt him, is undeniably plain from hence; becauſe his firſt and great Sin, which coſt him his angelical Life, and took from him his Crown of Glory, conſiſted in this, that he luſted to know, and took the Means of knowing, what Good and Evil are in the beſtial Life of this World: For this plainly demonſtrates, that before his Sin, whilſt he ſtood in the firſt State of his Creation, that he was an Angel in Nature and Power, that neither his *own outward* Body, nor any Part of outward Nature, had any Power in him or upon him; for had his own outward Body, or any Element of outward Nature, had any Power to act upon him, to make any Impreſſions, or raiſe any Senſations in him, he could not have been ignorant of Good and Evil in this World. Therefore, ſeeing that his eating of the forbidding Tree, was that alone which opened this Knowledge in him, it is a Demonſtration, that in his firſt

State

State he was in this World as an Angel, that was put into the Poſſeſſion of it only to rule as a ſuperior Being over it; that he was to have no Share of its Life and Nature, no Feeling of Good or Evil from it, but to act in it as an heavenly Artiſt, that had Power and Skill to open the Wonders of God in every Power of outward Nature. An Angel, we read, uſed at a certain Time to come down into a *Pool* at *Jeruſalem*; the Water ſtirred by the Angel gave forth its Virtues, but the Angel felt no Impreſſions of *Weight*, or *Cold* from the Water. This is an Image of *Adam*'s firſt Freedom from, and Power over all outward Nature. He could, wherever he went, do as this Angel did, make every Element, and elementary Thing, diſcover all the Riches of God that were hidden in it, without feeling any Impreſſions of any kind from it. This was to have been the Work both of *Adam* and his Offſpring, to make all the Creation ſhew forth the Glory of God, to ſpread Paradiſe over all the Earth, till the Time came, that all the Good in this World was to be called back to its firſt State, and all the Evil in every Part left to be poſſeſſed by the Devil and his Angels. But ſince He fell from this firſt State into an *Animal* of this World, his Work is changed, and he muſt

now

now labour with Sweat to *till* the curſed Earth, both for Himſelf and the Beaſts upon it.

Let us now conſider ſome plain and important Truths, that follow from what has been ſaid above.

Firſt, It is plain that the Sin and Fall of *Adam* did not conſiſt in this, *viz.* that he had only committed *a ſingle Act of Diſobedience*, and ſo might have been juſt as He was before, if GOD had pleaſed to overlook this *ſingle Act* of Diſobedience, and not to have brought a Curſe upon him and his Poſterity for it.—Nothing of this is the Truth of the Matter, either on the Part of GOD, or on the Part of Man.

Secondly, It is plain alſo that the Command of GOD, not to luſt after, and eat of the forbidden Tree, was not an *arbitrary* Command of GOD, given at Pleaſure, or as a mere Trial of Man's Obedience; but was a moſt kind and loving *Information* given by the GOD of Love to his new-born Offspring, concerning the State He was in with Regard to the outward World: Warning him to withdraw all Deſire of entering into a *Senſibility* of its Good and Evil; becauſe ſuch Senſibility could not be had, without his immediate dying to that

that divine and heavenly Life which he then enjoyed. *Eat not*, says the God of Love, *of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, for in the Day thou eatest thereof thou wilt surely die.*

As if it had been said, 'I have brought 'Thee into this Paradise, with such a Nature 'as the Angels have in Heaven. By the 'Order and Dignity of thy Creation, every 'Thing that lives and moves in this World 'is made subject to Thee, as to their Ruler. 'I have made Thee in thy outward Body of 'this World, to be for a Time a little lower 'than the Angels, till Thou hast brought 'forth a numerous Offspring, fit for that 'Kingdom which They have lost. The 'World around Thee, and the Life which is 'newly awakened in it, is much lower than 'Thou art; of a Nature quite inferior to 'thine. It is a gross, corruptible State of 'Things, that cannot stand long before me; 'but must for a while bear the Marks of 'those Creatures, which first made Evil to 'be known in the Creation. The Angels, 'that first inhabited this Region, where Thou 'art to bring forth a new Order of Beings, 'were great and powerful Spirits, highly en-'dowed with the Riches and Powers of their 'Creator. Whilst they stood (as the Order 'of Creation requires) in Meekness and Re-signation,

' ſignation, under their Creator, nothing was
' impoſſible to them; there was no End of
' their glorious Powers throughout their whole
' Kingdom. Perpetual Scenes of Light, and
' Glory, and Beauty, were riſing and chang-
' ing through all the Height and Depth of
' their *glaſſy Sea*, merely at their Will and
' Pleaſure. But finding what Wonders of
' Light and Glory they could perpetually
' bring forth; how all the *Powers* of Eterni-
' ty, treaſured up in their *glaſſy Sea*, unfold-
' ed themſelves, and broke forth in raviſhing
' Forms of Wonder and Delight, merely in
' Obedience to their Call; they began to ad-
' mire and even adore themſelves, and to fan-
' cy that there was *ſome Infinity of Power*
' *hidden* in themſelves, which they ſuppoſed
' was kept under, and ſuppreſſed, by that
' Meekneſs, and Subjection to GOD, under
' which they acted. Fired and intoxicated
' with this proud Imagination, they boldly
' reſolved, with all their eternal Energy and
' Strength, to take their Kingdom, with all
' its Glories, to themſelves, by eternally ab-
' juring all Meekneſs and Submiſſion to GOD.
' No ſooner did their eternal potent Deſires
' fly in this Direction of a Revolt from GOD,
' but in the Swiftneſs of a Thought Heaven
' was loſt; and they found themſelves dark
' Spirits,

‘ Spirits, ſtripped of all their Light and Glory.
‘ Inſtead of Riſing up above God (as they
‘ hoped) by breaking off from Him, there
‘ was no End of their eternal Sinking into
‘ new Depths of Slavery, under their own
‘ ſelf-tormenting Natures. As a Wheel go-
‘ ing down a Mountain, that has no Bottom,
‘ muſt continually keep on its Turning, ſo
‘ are they whirled down by the Impetuoſi-
‘ ty of their own wrong turned Wills, in a
‘ continual Deſcent from the Fountain of all
‘ Glory, into the bottomleſs Depths of their
‘ own dark, fiery, working Powers: In no
‘ Hell, but what their own natural Strength
‘ had awakened; bound in no Chains, but
‘ their own unbending, hardened Spirits;
‘ made ſuch, by their renouncing, with all
‘ their eternal Strength, all Meekneſs, and
‘ Subjection to God. In that Moment, the
‘ beautiful Materiality of their Kingdom,
‘ their *glaſſy Sea* in which they dwelt, was
‘ by the wrathful rebellious Workings of theſe
‘ apoſtate Spirits broke all into Pieces, and
‘ became a black Lake, a horrible Chaos of
‘ Fire and Wrath, Thickneſs and Darkneſs,
‘ A Height and Depth of the confuſed, di-
‘ vided, fighting Properties of Nature. My
‘ creating *Fiat* ſtopped the Workings of theſe
‘ rebellious Spirits, by dividing the Ruins of

‘ their

' their wafted Kingdom, into an Earth, a
' Sun, Stars, and feperated Elements. Had
' not this Revolt of Angels brought forth that
' diforded *Chaos*, no fuch Materiality as this
' outward World is made of had ever been
' known. Grofs compacted Earth, Stones,
' Rocks, wrathful Fire here, dead Water
' there, fighting Elements, with all their grofs
' Vegetables and Animals, are Things not
' known in Eternity, and will be only feen in
' Time, till the great Deigns are finifhed,
' for which Thou art brought forth in Para-
' dife. And then, as a Fire awakened by the
' Rebel Creature, began all the Diforders of
' Nature, and turned that glaffy Sea into a
' Chaos, fo a *laft Fire*, kindled at my Word,
' fhall thoroughly purge the Floor of this
' World. In thofe purifying Flames the
' Sun, the Stars, the Air, the Earth and Wa-
' ter, fhall part with all their Drofs, Dead-
' nefs, and Divifion, and all become again
' that firft heavenly Materiality, a *glaffy Sea*
' of everlafting Light and Glory, in which
' Thou and thy Offspring fhall fing Hallelu-
' jahs to all Eternity. Look not therefore,
' thou Child of Paradife, thou Son of Eter-
' nity, look not with a longing Eye after any
' Thing in this outward World. There are
' the Remains of the fallen Angels in it; Thou

‘ haſt nothing to do in it, but as a Ruler
‘ over it. It ſtands before Thee, as a Myſ-
‘ tery big with Wonders; and Thou, whilſt
‘ an Angel in Paradiſe, haſt Power to open
‘ and diſplay them all. It ſtands not in thy
‘ Sphere of Exiſtence; it is, as it were, but
‘ a Picture, and tranſitory Figure of Things;
‘ for all that is not Eternal is but as an I-
‘ mage in a Glaſs, that ſeems to have a Re-
‘ ality, which it has not. The Life which
‘ ſprings up in this Figure of a World, in
‘ ſuch an infinite Variety of Kinds and De-
‘ grees, is but as a Shadow; it is a Life of
‘ ſuch Days and Years, as in Eternity have
‘ no Diſtinction from a Moment. It is a
‘ Life of ſuch Animals and Inſects, as are
‘ without any divine Senſe, Capacity, or
‘ Feeling. Their Natures have nothing in
‘ them but what I commanded this new
‘ modelled *Chaos*, this Order of Stars and
‘ fighting Elements, to bring forth.

‘ Now *Adam*, obſerve, I will open to Thee
‘ a great Myſtery. The heavenly Materia-
‘ lity of the Angels Kingdom before their
‘ Revolt was a *glaſſy Sea*, a Mirror of beau-
‘ teous Forms, Figures, Virtues, Powers, Co-
‘ lours, and Sounds, which were perpetually
‘ ſpringing up, appearing and changing in
‘ an infinite Variety, to the Manifeſtation of

‘ the

‘ the Wonders of the divine Nature, and to
‘ the Joy of all the Angelical Kingdom. This
‘ heavenly Materiality had its Fruits and
‘ Vegetables, much more real than any that
‘ grow in Time, but as different from the
‘ Groſſneſs of the Fruits of this World, as
‘ the heavenly Body of an Angel in different
‘ from the Body of the groſſeſt Beaſt upon
‘ Earth. In this angelical Kingdom the *one*
‘ Element (which is now in four Parts) was
‘ then a fruitful Mother of Wonders, con-
‘ tinually bringing forth new *Forms* and *Fi-*
‘ *gures of Life*; not Animals, Beaſts, or In-
‘ ſects, but beautiful *Figures*, and *ideal* Forms
‘ of the endleſs Diviſibility, and Degrees of
‘ Life, which only broke forth as delightful
‘ Wonders of the Depth of the Riches of
‘ the Divine Nature, and to tune the Voices
‘ of Angels with Songs of Praiſe to the infi-
‘ nite Source of Life. And hence, O *Adam*,
‘ is that endleſs infinite Variety both of the
‘ animal and vegetable Life in this periſhable
‘ World. For no Fruits of Vegetables could
‘ have ſprung up in the divided Elements,
‘ but becauſe they are the divided Parts of
‘ that one heavenly Materiality, or *glaſſy Sea*
‘ in which angelical Fruits had formerly
‘ grown forth. No animal Life could have
‘ aroſe from Stars, Air, and Water, but be-

'cauſe they are all of them the groſs Remains of that one Element, in which the *Figures* and *Images* of Life had once riſen up in ſuch an infinite Variety of Degrees and Kinds. Hence it was, that when my creating *Fiat* ſpoke to theſe new ranged Stars and Elements, and bid Life awake in them all *according to its Kind*, they all obeyed my Word, and every Property of Nature ſtrove to bring forth, after the *Kind* and *Manner* as it had done in the Region of Eternity. This, my Son, is the Source and Original of all that infinite Variety, and Degrees of Life, both of Animals and Vegetables in this World. It is becauſe all outward Nature, being fallen from Heaven, muſt yet, as well as it can, do and work as it had done in Heaven.

'In Heaven all Births and Growths, all Figures and ſpiritual Forms of Life, though infinite in Variety, are yet all of a heavenly Kind, and only ſo many Manifeſtations of the Goodneſs, Wiſdom, Beauty, and Riches of the Divine Nature. But in this new modelled *Chaos*, where the Diſorders that were raiſed by *Lucifer* are not wholly removed, but Evil and Good muſt ſtand in Strife till the laſt purifying Fire, here every Kind and Degree of Life, like the World

'from

' from whence it ſprings, is a Mixture of
' Good and Evil in its Birth.

' Therefore, my Son, be content with thy
' angelical Nature, be content, as an Angel in
' Paradiſe, to eat Angels Food, and to rule
' over this mixed, imperfect, and periſhing
' World, without partaking of its corruptible,
' impure and periſhing Nature. Luſt not
' to know *how* the Animals feel the Evil and
' Good which this Life affords them: for if
' Thou couldſt feel what they feel, Thou
' muſt be as they are: Thou canſt not have
' their *Senſibility* unleſs Thou haſt their Na-
' ture: Thou canſt not at once be an Angel
' and an earthly Animal. If the beſtial Life
' is raiſed up in Thee, the ſame Inſtant the
' heavenly Birth of thy Nature muſt die in
' Thee. Therefore turn away thy Luſt and
' Imagination from a Tree, that can only
' help Thee to the Knowledge of ſuch Good
' and Evil, as belongs only to the Animals
' of this outward World; for nothing but
' the beſtial Nature can receive Good or Evil
' from the Stars and Elements; they have
' no Power, but over that Life which pro-
' ceeds from them. Eat therefore only the
' Food of Paradiſe; be content with Angels
' Bread; for if thou eateſt of this Tree, it
' will unavoidably awaken and open the

‘ beſtial Life within Thee; and in that Mo-
‘ ment all that is heavenly muſt die, and
‘ ceaſe to have any Power in Thee. And
‘ Thou muſt fall into a Slavery for Life
‘ under the divided fighting Powers of Stars
‘ and Elements. Stripped of thy angelical
‘ Garment, that hid thy outward Body un-
‘ der its Glory, thou wilt become more
‘ naked than any Beaſt upon earth, be forced
‘ to ſeek from Beaſts a Covering, to hide Thee
‘ from the Sight of thine own Eyes. A
‘ ſhameful, fearful, ſickly, wanting, ſuffer-
‘ ing, and diſtreſſed Heir of the ſame ſpeedy
‘ Death in the Duſt of the Earth, as the poor
‘ Beaſts, whom Thou will thus have made
‘ to be thy Brethren.’

This Paraphraſe I leave to the Reflection of the Reader, and proceed to ſhew;

Thirdly, That the Miſery, Diſtreſs, and woful Condition, which *Adam* by his Tranſgreſſion brought upon Himſelf, and all his Poſterity, was not the Effect of any *ſevere vindictive* Wrath *in* God, calling for Juſtice to his offended Sovereignty, and inflicting Pains and Puniſhments ſuitable to the Greatneſs of his juſt Indignation and Anger at the diſobedient Creature.

If

If *Adam*, contrary to the Will of GOD, and for the ſake of ſome new-fancied Knowledge, had broken both his own Legs, and put out both his Eyes, could it with any ſhew of Truth and Reaſon have been ſaid, that GOD, in the Severity of his Wrath at ſo heinous an Offence, had puniſhed *Adam* with *Lameneſs* and *Blindneſs?* and if it be further ſuppoſed, that GOD ſeeing *Adam* lying in this lame and blind Condition, came and ſpoke kindly to him, informing him of a *Secret of Love* which He had in Heaven, which he promiſed to ſend him immediately by his higheſt Meſſenger of Love; aſſuring him, that by the Uſe of this heavenly *Secret* or *divine Power*, his Legs and Eyes ſhould, in ſome Courſe of Time, be infallibly reſtored to him, even in a better State than they were in at the firſt; muſt it not be ſtill more unreaſonable and abſurd, to charge any thing of this *Lameneſs* and *Blindneſs* upon a *Wrath* in GOD kindled againſt *Adam?* Nay, is it not clear, in the higheſt Degree, that in all this Matter *Adam* had nothing from GOD, but the Overflowings of mere Love and Goodneſs, and that he had no Lameneſs and Blindneſs, but from his own voluntary Acts upon himſelf?

This is a ſimple, but clear Repreſentation

of the Caſe, how Matters ſtood betwixt God and our firſt Father, when by his own Act and Deed he extinguiſhed that divine Life, in which God had created him. *Adam* had no more hurt, no more Evil done to Him at his Fall, than the very Nature of his *own Action* brought along with it upon himſelf. He luſted to have the *Senſibility* of that Good and Evil which the Beaſts of this World have. He was told, that it could not be had without the Loſs of his heavenly Life; becauſe ſuch Loſs was as neceſſarily implied in the Nature of the Thing itſelf, as Blindneſs is implied in the Extinction of Eyes. However, he ventured to make the Trial, and choſe to eat of That, which could and did open this *Senſibility* of earthly Good and Evil in him. No ſooner was this Senſibility opened in him, but he found it to be a *Subjection* and *Slavery* to all outward Nature, to Heat and Cold, to Pains and Sickneſs, Horror of Mind, diſturbed Paſſions, Miſery, and Fears of Death. Which is in other Words only ſaying, that he found it to be an Extinction of that divine angelical Nature, which till then had kept him inſenſible, and incapable of any hurtful Impreſſions, from any or all the Powers of this World. Therefore, to charge his miſerable

ſerable State as a Puniſhment inflicted upon him by the ſevere Wrath of an incenſed GOD, is the ſame Abſurdity, as in the former ſuppoſed Lameneſs and Blindneſs. Becauſe the whole Nature of all that miſerable Change, both as to *Body* and *Soul*, which then came upon him, was neither more nor leſs than what was neceſſarily implied in that which he choſe to do to himſelf. And therefore it had nothing of the Nature of a Puniſhment inflicted from *without*, but was only that which his own Action had done in and to himſelf; Juſt as the Man that puts out his own Eyes, has only that Darkneſs and Blindneſs which his own Action has brought forth in himſelf.

From this ſhort yet plain and true Account of this Matter, we are at once delivered from a Load of Difficulties that have been raiſed about the *Fall* of Man, and *Original Sin*. It has been a great Queſtion, How could the Goodneſs of GOD puniſh ſo *ſmall* and *ſingle* an Act of *Diſobedience* in *Adam*, with ſo great a Puniſhment? Here the *Sovereignty* of GOD has been appealed to, and has ſet the Matter right; and from this Sovereignty, thus aſſerted, came forth the Syſtems of abſolute *Election*, and abſolute *Reprobation*. But for our Comfort it appears,

that

that the Queſtion here put concerns neither GOD nor Man, that it relates not at all to the Matter, and has no Exiſtence, but in the Brains of thoſe that formed it, For the Action in which *Adam*'s Sin conſiſted, was ſuch an Act, as in *itſelf* implied *all that miſerable Change* that came upon him, and ſo was not a *ſmall* or *ſingle* Act of *Diſobedience*, nor had the leaſt Puniſhment of any kind inflicted by GOD upon it. All that GOD did on this Tranſgreſſion was mere Love, Compaſſion, and Relief adminiſtered to it. All the Sovereignty that God here ſhewed, was a Sovereignty of Love to the fallen Creature. So that all the *Volumes* on this Queſtion may be laid aſide, as quite beſide the Point. Another, and the greateſt Queſtion of all, and which *Divines* of all Sorts have been ever ſolving, and yet never have ſolved, is this; *How can it conſiſt with the Goodneſs of* GOD, *to impute the Sin of* Adam *to all his Poſterity?* But here, to our Comfort again, it may be ſaid, that this Queſtion is equally a vain Fiction with the other, and has nothing to do with the Procedure of GOD towards Mankind. For there is *no Imputation* of the Sin of *Adam* to his Poſterity, and ſo no Foundation for a Diſpute upon it. How abſurd would it be to ſay, that GOD *imputes* the Nature, or the Body and Soul of *Adam* to his Poſterity? for have they not the Nature

Nature of *Adam* by a natural Birth from him, and not by Imputation from GOD? Now this is all the Sin that *Adam*'s Poſterity have from him, they have only their Fleſh and Blood, their Body and Soul from him, by a Birth from him, and not *imputed* to them from GOD. Inſtead therefore of the former Queſtion, which is quite beſide the Matter, it ſhould have been aſked thus, How was it conſiſtent with the Goodneſs of GOD, *that* Adam *could not generate Children of a* Nature *and* Kind *quite ſuperior to himſelf?* This is the only Queſtion that can be aſked with relation to GOD; and yet it is a Queſtion whoſe Abſurdity confutes itſelf. For the only Reaſon why Sin is found in all the Sons of *Adam* is this, it is becauſe *Adam* of earthly Fleſh and Blood cannot bring forth a holy Angel out of himſelf, but muſt beget children of the ſame Nature and Condition with himſelf. And therefore here again it may be truly ſaid, that all the laborious Volumes on GOD's imputing *Adam*'s Sin to his Poſterity, ought to be conſidered as waſte Paper*.

But farther, As it is thus evident, from the Nature of *Adam*'s Tranſgreſſion, that all his Miſery came from the Nature of his own Action, and that nothing was inflicted upon him

* See *Appeal to all that Doubt*, &c. Page 198. Letter to the Biſhop of London, Page 70.

from

from a Wrath or Anger in GOD at him, ſo is it ſtill much more ſo, from a Conſideration of the Divine Nature. For it is a glorious and joyful Truth (however ſuppreſſed in various Syſtems of Divinity) that from Eternity to Eternity, no Spark of Wrath ever was, or ever will be, in the holy Tri-une GOD. If a Wrath of GOD was any where, it muſt be every where, if it burned once, it muſt burn to all Eternity. For every thing that is in GOD himſelf is boundleſs, incapable of any Increaſe or Diminution without Beginning and without End. It is as good Senſe, as conſiſtent with the Divine Nature, to ſay that GOD, moved by a Wrath *in* and *from* Himſelf, began the Creation, as that a Wrath in GOD ever puniſhed any Part of it. Nature and Creature is the only *Source* from whence, and the *Seat* in which, Wrath, Pain, and Vexation can dwell. Nor can they ever break forth either in *Nature* or *Creature*, but ſo far as either this, or that, has loſt its State in GOD. This is as certain, as that Storms and Tempeſts, Thunder and Lightnings, have no Exiſtence in Heaven. GOD, conſidered in Himſelf, is as infinitely ſeparate from all Poſſibility of doing Hurt, or willing Pain to any Creature, as he is from a Poſſibility of ſuffering Pain or Hurt from the Hand of a Man.

And

And this, for this plain Reaſon, becauſe He is in himſelf, in his holy Trinity, nothing elſe but the boundleſs Abyſs of all that is Good, and Sweet and Amiable, and therefore ſtands in the utmoſt Contrariety to every Thing that is not a Bleſſing, in an eternal Impoſſibility of willing and intending a Moment's Pain or Hurt to any Creature. For from this unbounded Source of Goodneſs and Perfection, nothing but infinite Streams of Bleſſing are perpetually flowing forth upon all Nature and Creature, in a more inceſſant Plenty, than Rays of Light ſtream from the Sun. And as the *Sun* has but one Nature, and can give forth nothing but the bleſſings of Light, ſo the holy Tri-une GOD has but *one* Nature and Intent towards all the Creation, which is, to pour fourth the Riches and Sweetneſs of his divine Perfections, upon every Thing that is capable of them, and according to its Capacity to receive them.

The Goodneſs of GOD breaking forth into a Deſire *to communicate Good*, was the Cauſe and the Beginning of the Creation. Hence it follows, that to all Eternity God can have no *Thought* or *Intent* towards the Creature, but *to communicate Good*; becauſe He made the Creature for this ſole End, to receive Good. The firſt Motive towards the Creature is unchange-

changable; it takes its Riſe from GOD's Deſire *to communicate Good*; and it is an eternal Impoſſibility, that any thing can ever come from GOD, as his *Will* and *Purpoſe* towards the Creature, but *that ſame Love and Goodneſs* will firſt created it: He muſt always *will* that to it, which He *willed* at the Creation of it. This is the amiable Nature of GOD, He is *the Good*, the unchangeable! overflowing Fountain of Good, that ſends forth nothing but Good to all Eternity. He is *the Love* itſelf, the unmixed, unmeaſurable Love, doing nothing but from Love, giving nothing but Gifts of Love to every Thing that He has made; requiring nothing of all his Creatures, but the Spirit and Fruits of that Love which brought them into Being. Oh how ſweet is this Contemplation of the Heighth and Depth of the Riches of Divine Love! with what Attraction muſt it draw every thoughtful Man, to return Love for Love to this overflowing Fountain of boundleſs Goodneſs? what Charms has that Religion, which diſcovers to us our Exiſtence in, Relation to, and Dependence upon this Ocean of divine Love! View every Part of our Redemption, from *Adam's* firſt Sin to the Reſurrection of the Dead, and you will find nothing but ſucceſſive Myſteries of that firſt

Love

Love which created Angels and Men. All the Myſteries of the Goſpel are only ſo many Marks and Proofs of GOD's deſiring to make his Love triumph, in the removal of Sin and Diſorder from all Nature and Creature*.

But to return, and conſider farther the Nature of *Adam's* Fall, We have ſeen that it conſiſted of no *arbitrary Puniſhment* inflicted on him by a Wrath raiſed *in* GOD, but was only ſuch a ſtate of Miſery, as his own Action neceſſarily brought upon him. Let us now ſee what happened to his Soul a little more diſtinctly, and how it differed from what it was before his Fall in its heavenly State.

The Angels that kept their State, and thoſe that fell from it, were at firſt of one and the ſame Nature; the Angels that fell did not loſe all the Nature, for then they muſt have fallen into *nothing*; they only loſt the heavenly and divine Part of it, and therefore there is ſomething ſtill remaining in them that is alſo in the holy Angels, and which is common to both of them. Now this which they did not loſe, becauſe it cannot be loſt, is a certain *Root of Life*, or *Ground* of their Exiſtence, which when once in Being cannot be broken, and in which the unceaſing Eternity or Immortality of their Nature conſiſts, a *Root* or firſt Ground of Life, equally capable of a Hea-

* *Spirit of Love*, Part the Second, Page 1—18. 71.

venly

venly Birth, or of a Birth and Growth into Hell. Now that there is this *Root* of Life in Angels, and that it is ſomething quite diſtinct from their heavenly Nature, is very plain from hence, that the Devils have loſt their *heavenly*, and yet have kept their *eternal* and *immortal* Nature; therefore that in which their Eternity and Immortality conſiſts, muſt be ſomething entirely diſtinct from their heavenly Nature, and muſt be alſo the ſame with *that*, in which the Eternity and Immortality of the holy Angels conſiſts. For the fallen Angels have no other *eternal Root* in them, but that which they had before their Fall, and which they brought from Heaven; and therefore *that* which is, and muſt be eternal and undying in their Nature, is the *ſame eternal Root* of Life, which is in the Angels that kept their State. And conſequently the only Difference betwixt an Angel and a Devil is this, that in the Angel its eternal *Root* of Life *generates* a Birth of the *Light* and holy *Spirit* of God in it; and in a Devil this eternal Root of Life has loſt *this Birth*, and the Power of bringing it forth again. Now here is to be truly ſeen the real Difference betwixt the Soul of *Adam* before and after his Fall. Before his Fall, it had the Nature of an Angel of God, in which the divine Birth of the

Light

Light and holy Spirit of GOD ſprung up; but when contrary to the Will and Command of GOD, a beſtial Life was awakened in him, the heavenly Life was neceſſarily extinguiſhed. The Soul therefore having loſt that heavenly Birth which made it like an Angel of GOD, had nothing remaining in it but that eternal and immortal *Root* of Life, which is the very Eſſence of a fallen Angel. But here we muſt obſerve a great and happy Difference betwixt the Soul of *Adam*, though dead to all that was heavenly, and the Soul of a Devil. The Angels that extinguiſhed the Birth of Heaven in themſelves, fell directly into the horrible Depths of their own ſtrong ſelf-tormenting Nature, or their *own Hell*, and that for theſe two Reaſons.

Firſt, Becauſe there was no where elſe for them to fall into, but into this tormenting Senſibility of their own fiery, wrathful, darkened Nature.

Secondly, Becauſe their Revolt from GOD was an Attempt and Intent to be higher and greater, by awakening and truſting to their own *natural Powers*, than they had hitherto been by Submiſſion to GOD. They would have a Greatneſs that ſprung only from *themſelves*, and therefore they found *That* which they ſought, they found themſelves left to all

the *Greatneſs* that was in themſelves, and that was *their Hell, viz.* a fiery Strength of a ſelf-tormenting Nature, becauſe ſeparate from the one Source of Light and Love of Peace and Joy.

But *Adam*, though his Soul was as entirely dead to Heaven as the Souls of the Devils were, yet fell not into *their Hell*, for theſe two Reaſons.

Firſt, Becauſe his Angelical Man dwelt in a Body taken from this outward World, which Body did not die at his Tranſgreſſion therefore his Soul that had loſt his Heavenly Light, did not fall directly into the Devil's Hell, but it fell into a Body of Earthly Fleſh and Blood, which being capable of the Enjoyments and Satisfactions of this Life, could whilſt it laſted, keep the Soul inſenſible of its own fallen State, and helliſh Condition.

Secondly, Becauſe *Adam* not aſpiring to be *above*, or *without* God, by his own proud Strength, but only luſting to enter into a *Senſibility* of the Good and Evil of the beſtial Life of this World, he found *only That* which he ſought, and fell into no *other State* or Miſery, than that beſtial Life, which his own Actions and deſires had opened in him. And therefore this outward World ſtood him in great Stead, it prevented his immediate Falling into the State of Fallen Angels.

But

But then as there was nothing that kept him out of the Hell of Fallen Angels, but his *Body* of Earthly Fleſh and Blood, and as this was now as *mortal* in him, as it was in the Beaſts, and lay at the Mercy of a thouſand Accidents, that could every Moment take it from him, ſo he was in his fallen State ſtanding as it were on the Brinks of Hell, liable every Moment to be puſhed into it*.

See here the *deep* Ground and *abſolute* Neceſſity of that new Birth of the *Word*, *Son* and *Spirit* of GOD, which the Scripture ſpeaks ſo much of. It is becauſe our Soul, as fallen, is quite dead to, and ſeparate from the Kingdom of Heaven, by having loſt the Light and Spirit of God in itſelf; and therefore it is, and muſt be incapable of entering into heaven, till by this new Birth the Soul gets again its firſt Heavenly Nature.

If thou haſt nothing of this Birth when thy Body dies, then thou haſt only that *Root* of Life in Thee which the devils have, thou art as far from Heaven, and as incapable of it as they are; thy Nature is their Nature, and therefore their Habitation muſt be thine. For nothing can poſſibly hinder thy Union with Fallen Angels, when thou dieſt, but a Birth

* See *Grounds and Reaſons of Regeneration.* P. 6.—12. P. 39—48.

of *That* in thy Soul, which the fallen Angels have *loſt*.

How pitiable therefore, or rather how hurtful is that *Learning*, which uſes all its Art of Words, to avoid and loſe the true Senſe of our Saviour's Doctrine concerning the new Birth, which is neceſſary to fallen Man, by holding that the paſſages aſſerting the new Birth are only a *figurative*, ſtrong Form of Words concerning *ſomething*, that is not *really* a Birth or Growth of a new Nature, but may, according to the beſt Rules of *Criticiſm*, ſignify either our *Entrance* into the Society of Chriſtians by the Rite of Baptiſm, or ſuch a new Relation as a Scholar may have with his Maſter, who by a Conformity to Terms of Union, or by copying his Ways and Manners, may, by a *Figure of Speech*, be ſaid to be born again of him.

Now let it here be obſerved, that no Paſſage of Scripture is to be called, or eſteemed as a *figurative* Expreſſion, but where the *literal* Meaning cannot be allowed, as implying ſomething that is either bad in itſelf or *impoſſible*, or *inconſiſtent* with ſome plain and undeniable Doctrines of Scripture. Now that this is not the Caſe here is very evident. For who will preſume to ſay, that for the Soul of fallen Man to be born again of the Son, or

Light,

Light, and Holy Spirit of God, is in the *literal* Senſe of the Words a Thing *bad* in itſelf, or *impoſſible*, or *inconſiſtent* with any plain and undeniable Doctrines of Scripture? The *Critics* therefore, who in this Matter leave the literal Meaning of the Words, and have Recourſe to a figurative Senſe, or without Excuſe, and have nothing they can urge as a Reaſon for ſo doing, but their own Skill in Words. But it may be further added, as a juſt Charge againſt theſe *Critics*, that their fixing theſe Paſſages to a figurative Meaning, is not only without any Ground or Reaſon for ſo doing, but is alſo a *bad* Meaning, *impoſſible* to be true, and utterly *inconſiſtent* with the moſt plain and fundamental Doctrines of Scripture. Now that this is the Caſe here, may in Part be ſeen by the following Inſtance.

Let it be ſuppoſed, that an human Body has loſt the *Light* and *Air* of this World, and was in a State of Death, becauſe both theſe were quite extinguiſhed in it. Muſt it not be ſaid, that this human Body cannot ſee, or enter again into the Life of this World, unleſs the Light and Air of this World get again a *new Birth* in it: Is there here any Occaſion, or any Room to form a Doubt, how theſe Words are to be underſtood, or any Poſſibility to miſtake the Meaning of them?

What a *Philoſopher* would he be, who for fear of being called an *Anthuſiaſt*, ſhould here deny the *literal* Meaning of a new Birth of *Light* and *Air*, and think himſelf ſufficiently juſtified in flying from it, becauſe in his great Reading he had ſeen the Words, *Birth*, *Light* and *Air*, ſometimes, and upon ſome Occaſions, uſed only in a *figurative* Senſe?

Now this is exactly, and to a Tittle the Caſe of the Soul, as fallen, and lying in the ſame State of Death to the kingdom of GOD, till a *new Birth* of the Light and Spirit of GOD be again brought forth in it. And therefore the *Neceſſity* of underſtanding theſe words in their literal Meaning, the Abſurdity of flying to a *figurative* Senſe of the new Birth, and the *Impoſſibility* of that being the true one, is equally plain and certain in both theſe Caſes.

Now that the Soul, as fallen, is in this *real State* of Death, is a Doctrine not only plain from the whole Tenor of Scripture, but affirmed in all Syſtems of Divinity. For all hold, and teach, that Man *unredeemed* muſt at the Death of his Body have fallen into a State of Miſery, like that of the fallen Angels. But how can this be true, unleſs it be true, that the Life of Heaven

was

was extinguiſhed in the Soul, and that Man had really loſt that Light and Spirit of GOD, which alone can make any Being capable of living in Heaven? All therefore that I have here, and elſewhere ſaid, concerning the Death of the Soul by its Fall, and its wanting a *real* new Birth of the Son and Holy Spirit of GOD in it, in order to its Salvation, cannot be denied, but by giving up this great fundamental Doctrine, namely, *That Man in his fallen State, and unredeemed, muſt have been eternally loſt.* For it cannot be true, that the Fall of Man unredeemed would have kept him for ever out of Heaven, but becauſe his Fall had abſolutely put an End to the Life of Heaven in his Soul.

On the other Hand, it cannot be true that JESUS CHRIST is his Redeemer, and does deliver him from his fallen State, unleſs it be true, that JESUS CHRIST helps him to a new Birth of that Light and Spirit of GOD which was extinguiſhed by his Fall. For nothing could poſſibly be the Redemption, or Recovery of Man, but *Regeneration* alone. His Miſery was his having loſt the Life and Light of Heaven from his Soul, and therefore nothing in all the Univerſe of Nature, but a new Birth of that which he had

loſt, could be his Deliverance from his fallen State.

And therefore if Angels after Angels had come down from Heaven to aſſure him, that GOD had no Anger at him, he would ſtill have been in the ſame *helpleſs State*; nay, had they told him, that GOD had Pity and Compaſſion towards him, he had yet been *unhelped*; becauſe in the Nature of the Thing, nothing could make ſo much as a Beginning of his Deliverance, but that which made a Beginning of a new Birth in him, and nothing could fully effect his Recovery, but which perfectly finiſhed the new Birth of all that heavenly Life which he had loſt.

The Goſpel tells us of a certain Man that fell among Thieves, who ſtripped him, and wounded him, and left him half dead; that firſt a *Prieſt*, then a *Levite* coming that Way, both of them avoided the poor Man, by paſſing on the other Side.

Here it is plain, that this Prieſt and Levite left the poor Man in the *ſame helpleſs* State in which they found him. Let it now be ſuppoſed, that inſtead of going on the other Side of the Road, they had come up to him, and poured *Oil* and *Wine* into his Wounds, only in a *figurative* Senſe of the Words,

Words, that is, that they had ſpoke ſuch Words to him, Words ſo *ſoft*, ſo oily and reviving, that in a juſt *Figure* of Speech, they might be called a *pouring of Wine and Oil* into his Wounds. Now had they done this, muſt it not ſtill be ſaid, that the poor Man's Wounds and Nakedneſs were ſtill left in their firſt *helpleſs* State? And all for this plain Reaſon, becauſe the poor Man was naked and wounded, not in a *figurative* Senſe of the Words, but *really* and *truly*, and therefore could have no Help or Benefit, but from real Oil and Wine really poured into his Wounds. And for the ſame plain Reaſon, the fatal Soul, *really* dead to the Kingdom of Heaven, can have no Help but by a new Birth of the Light and Spirit of Heaven, *really* brought forth again in it. When *Adam* lay in his death Wounds to the Kingdom of God, had the higheſt Order of *Archangels or Seraphims* come by that Way, they could only have done as the Prieſt and Levite did, go on the other Side; or if they had come up to him, and done all they could for him, it could only have been ſuch a *Good* or *Relief* to him, as by a *Figure* of Speech might be ſo called.

For as *Adam* had extinguiſhed the Light and Spirit of God in himſelf, ſo no one could

could be the *good Samaritan* to him, or pour that Wine and Oil into his Wounds which they wanted, but He who was the *Author* and *Source* of Light and Life to every Being that lives in heaven.

One would wonder how any Perſons, that believe the great Myſtery of our Redemption who adore the Depths of the Divine Goodneſs, in that the Son of God, the ſecond Perſon in the Trinity, became a Man himſelf, in order to make it *poſſible* for Man by a *Birth* from him to enter again into the Kingdom of GOD, ſhould yet ſeek to, and contend for, not a *real*, but a figurative Senſe of a new Birth in JESUS CHRIST. Is there any Thing more inconſiſtent than this? Or can any Thing ſtrike more directly at the Heart of the whole Nature of our Redemption? GOD became Man, took upon him a Birth from the fallen Nature. But why was this done? Or wherein lies the adorable Depth of this Myſtery? How does all this manifeſt the Infinity of the Divine Love towards Man? It is becauſe nothing leſs than this myſterious Incarnation (which aſtoniſhes Angels) could open a *Way* or begin a *Poſſibility*, for fallen Man to be *born again* from above, and made again a *Partaker* of the Divine Nature. It was becauſe

cauſe Man was become ſo dead to the Kingdom of Heaven, that there was no Help for him through all Nature. No Powers, no Abilities of the higheſt Order of Creatures, could kindle the leaſt Spark of Life in him, or help him to the leaſt Glimpſe of that heavenly Light which he had loſt. Now when all Nature and Creature ſtood round about *Adam* as unable to help him, as he was to help himſelf, and all of them *unable* to help him, for *this Reaſon*, becauſe *that* which he had loſt was the *Life* and *Light* of Heaven, how glorious, how adorable is that Myſtery which enables us to ſay, that when Man laid thus incapable of any Relief from all the *Powers* and *Poſſibilities* of Nature, that then the ſon, the Word of God, entered by a Birth into this fallen Nature that by this myſterious Incarnation all the fallen Nature might be *born again* of him according to the *Spirit*, in the *ſame Reality*, as they were born of *Adam* according to the *Fleſh?* Look at this Myſtery in this true Light, in this plain Senſe of Scripture, and then you muſt be forced to fall down before it, in Adoration of it. For all that is great and aſtoniſhing in the Goodneſs of God, all that is glorious and happy with

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Regard to Man, is manifeſtly contained in it.

But tell me, I pray, what becomes of all this, what is there left in any Part of the Myſtery, if this *new Birth*, for the Sake of which GOD became Man, is not really a new Birth in the Thing itſelf, is not, as the Scripture affirms, a real Birth of the Son and Spirit of GOD in the Soul, but ſomething or other, this or that, which the *Critics* ſay, may be called a new Birth by a certain Figure of Speech? Is not *this* to give up all our Redemption at once, and a turning all the Myſteries of our Salvation into mere empty unmeaning Terms of Speech? He that ſhould deny the *Reality* of the Reſurrection, upon pretence that by the Rules of Criticiſm, it needs not ſignify a real coming out of a State of Natural Death, might have more to ſay for himſelf both from Reaſon and Scripture, than he that denies the Reality of the new Birth in CHRIST JESUS. For this new Birth is not a *Part*, but the *Whole* of our Salvation. Every Thing in Religion, from the Beginning to the End of Time, is only for the Sake of it. Nothing does us any Good, but either as it helps forward our Regeneration,

ration, or as it is a true Fruit or Effect of it.

All the glad Tidings of the Gospel, all the Benefits of our Saviour, however variously expressed in Scripture, all center in this one Point, that He is become our Light, our Life, our Resurrection, our Holiness and Salvation; that we are in Him new Creatures, *created again* unto Righteousness, born again of Him, from above, of the Spirit of God. Every Thing in the Gospel is for the Sake of this new Creature, this new Man in Christ Jesus, and nothing is regarded without it. What Excuse therefore can be made for that Learning, which, robbed us of the true Fruits of the Tree of Life, leaves us nothing to feed upon but the dry Dust of Words?

I am the Vine, Ye are the Branches. Here Christ, our second *Adam*, uses this Similitude to teach us, that the new Birth that we are to have from Him is *real*, in the most strict and literal Sense of the Words, and that there is the same *Nearness* of Relation betwixt Him and his true Disciples, that there is betwixt the *Vine* and its Branches, that He does all that in us and for us, which the Vine does to its Branches. Now the Life of the Vine must be really derived into

into the Branches, they cannot be Branches till the Birth of the Vine is brought forth in them. And therefore as ſure as the Birth of the Vine muſt be brought forth in the Branches, ſo ſure is it that we muſt be born again of our ſecond *Adam*; and that unleſs the Life of the Holy JESUS be in us by a Birth from Him, we are as dead to Him, and the Kingdom of God, as the Branch is dead to the Vine, from which it is broken off.

Again our Bleſſed Saviour ſays, *Without me ye can do Nothing*. The Queſtion is, When, or how a Man may be ſaid to be *without* CHRIST? Conſider again the Vine and its Branches: A Branch can then only to be ſaid to be without its Vine when the Vegetable Life of the Vine is no longer *in it*. This is the only Senſe in which we can be ſaid to be *without* CHRIST; when He is no longer in us, as a Principle of a heavenly Life, we are then without Him, and ſo *can do Nothing*, that is, Nothing that is good or holy. A CHRIST not *in us*, is the ſame Thing as a CHRIST *not ours*. If we are only *ſo far* with Chriſt, as to own and receive the Hiſtory of his Birth, Perſon, and Character, if this is all that we have of Him, we are as much *without* Him, as much left to ourſelves, as little helped by Him, as thoſe evil Spirits which cried out, *We know Thee who*

who thou art, the Holy One of God. For thoſe evil Spirits, and all the fallen Angels, are totally *without* CHRIST, have no Benefit from Him, for this *one* and *only* Reaſon, becauſe CHRIST is not *in Them* Nothing of the Son of GOD is *generated* or *born* in them. Therefore every Son of *Adam*, that has not *ſomething* of the Son of GOD *generated*, or born *within* Him, is as much *without Chriſt*, as deſtitute of all Help from Him, as thoſe evil Spirits who could only make an *outward Confeſſion* of Him.

It is the Language of Scripture, that *Chriſt in us* is our Hope of Glory that CHRIST formed in us, living, growing, and raiſing his own Life and Spirit in us, is our only Salvation. And indeed all this is plain from the Nature of the Thing; for ſince the *Serpent*, *Sin*, *Death*, and *Hell*, are all eſſentially *within* us, the very *Growth* of our Nature, muſt not our Redemption be equally *inward*, an inward *eſſential Death* to this State of our Souls, and an inward Growth of a contrary Life within us? If *Adam* was only an *outward Perſon*, if his whole Nature was not our Nature, born in us, and derived *from Him into us*, it would be Nonſenſe to ſay that his Fall is our Fall. So, in like manner, if CHRIST, our ſecond *Adam*, was only an *outward* Perſon, if He entered

entered not as *deeply* into our Nature as the firſt *Adam* does, if we have not *as really* from Him a new inward ſpiritual Man, as we have outward Fleſh and Blood from *Adam*, what Ground could there be to ſay, that our Righteouſneſs is from Him, as our Sin is from *Adam?*

Let no one here think to charge me with Diſregard to the Holy JESUS, who was born of the *Virgin Mary*, or with ſetting up an *inward* Saviour in Oppoſition to that outward CHRIST, whoſe Hiſtory is recorded in the Goſpel. No: It is with the utmoſt Fulneſs of Faith and Aſſurance, that I aſcribe all our Redemption to that bleſſed and Myſterious Perſon that was then born of the *Virgin Mary* and will aſſert no inward Redemption, but what wholly proceeds from, and is effected by that Life-giving Redeemer, who died on the Croſs for our Redemption.

Was I to ſay, that a *Plant* or *Vegetable* muſt have the Sun *within* it, muſt have the Life, Light, and Virtues of the Sun incorporated *in it*, that it has no Benefit from the Sun, till the Sun is thus *inwardly* forming, generating, quickening, and raiſing up a Life of the Sun's Virtues in it, would this be ſetting up an *inward* Sun in Oppoſition to the outward one? Could any Thing be more ridi-

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culous than such a Charge? For is not all that is here said of an inward Sun in the Vegetable, so much said of a Power and Virtue derived from the Sun in the Firmament? So, in like manner, all that is said of an inward Christ, inwardly formed, and generated in the Root of the Soul, is only so much said of an *inward Life*, brought forth by the *Power* and *Efficacy* of that Blessed CHRIST that was born of the *Virgin Mary*.

CHAP. II.

Discovering the true Way of turning to GOD, *and of finding the Kingdom of Heaven, the Riches of Eternity, in our Souls.*

THOU hast seen, dear Reader, the Nature and Necessity of *Regeneration*, be persuaded therefore fully to believe, and firmly to settle in thy Mind this most certain Truth, that all our Salvation consists in the *Manifestation of the Nature, Life, and Spirit of Jesus Christ in our inward new Man.* This alone is Christian Redemption, this alone delivers from the Guilt and Power of Sin, this alone redeems, renews, and regains the first Life of GOD in the Soul of Man. Every Thing besides this is *Self*, is *Fiction*, is *Pro-*

priety, is *own Will*, and however coloured, is only thy *old Man*, *with all his Deeds*. Enter therefore with all thy Heart into this Truth, let thy Eye be always upon it, do every Thing in View of it, try every Thing by the Truth of it, love Nothing but for the Sake of it. Whereever thou goeſt, whatever thou doeſt, at Home, or Abroad, in the Field, or at Church, do all in a Deſire of Union with CHRIST, in Imitation of his Tempers and Inclinations, and look upon all as Nothing, but that which exerciſes and encreaſes the Spirit and Life of CHRIST in thy Soul. From Morning to Night keep JESUS in thy Heart, long for Nothing, deſire Nothing, hope for Nothing, but to have all that is within Thee changed into the Spirit and Temper of the Holy JESUS. Let this be thy *Chriſtianity*, thy *Church*, and thy *Religion*. For this new Birth in CHRIST thus firmly believed, and continually deſired, will do every Thing that thou wanteſt to have done in Thee, it will dry up all the Springs of Vice, ſtop all the Workings of Evil in thy Nature, it will bring all that is Good into Thee, it will open all the Goſpel within Thee, and thou wilt know what it is to be taught of GOD. This longing Deſire of thy Heart to be *one* with CHRIST will ſoon put a ſtop to

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all the Vanity of thy Life, and nothing will be admitted to enter into thy Heart, or proceed from it, but what comes from GOD and returns to God; thou wilt soon be, as it were, tied and bound in the Chains of all holy Affections and Desires, thy *Mouth* will have a *Watch* set upon it, thy *Ears* would willingly hear nothing that does not tend to GOD, nor thy *Eyes* be open, but to see, and find Occasions of doing Good. In a Word, when this Faith has got both thy *Head* and thy *Heart*, it will then be with thee, as it was with the *Merchant* who found a *Pearl of great Price*, it will make thee gladly to *sell all that thou hast, and buy it*. For all that had seized and possessed the Heart of any Man, whatever the *Merchant* of this World had got together, whether of Riches, Power, Honour, Learning, or Reputation, loses all its Value, is counted but as *Dung*, and willingly parted with, as soon as this glorious Pearl, the new Birth in CHRIST JESUS, is discovered and found by him. This therefore may serve as a *Touch-stone*, whereby every one may try the Truth of his State; if the old Man is still a *Merchant* within thee, trading in all sorts of worldly Honour, Power, or Learning, if the Wisdom of this World is not Foolishness to thee, if earthly Interests, and sensual Pleasures, are

ſtill the Deſire of thy Heart, and only covered under a *Form* of Godlineſs, a *Cloak* of Creeds, Obſervances, and Inſtitutions of Religion, thou mayeſt be aſſured that the *Pearl of great Price* is not yet found by thee. For where CHRIST is born, or his Spirit raiſes up in the Soul, *there all Self* is denied, and obliged to turn out; *there* all carnal Wiſdom, Arts of Advancement, with every Pride and Glory of this Life, are ſo many *heathen Idols* all willingly renounced, and the Man is not only content, but rejoices to ſay, that *his Kingdom is not of this World.*

But thou wilt perhaps ſay, How ſhall this great Work, the Birth of CHRIST, be effected in me? it might rather be ſaid, ſince CHRIST has an infinite Power, and alſo an infinite Deſire to ſave Mankind, How can any one miſs of this Salvation, but through his *own unwillingneſs* to be ſaved by Him? Conſider, How was it, that the *Lame* and *Blind*, the *Lunatic* and *Leper*, the *Publican* and *Sinner*, found CHRIST to be their Saviour, and to do *all That* for them, which they wanted to be done to them? It was becauſe they had a REAL DESIRE of having *That* which they aſked for, and therefore in true *Faith* and *Prayer* applied to CHRIST, that his Spirit and Power might enter into them, and heal That which

which they wanted, and desired to be healed in them. Every one of these said in *Faith and Desire, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me whole.* And the Answer was always this, *According to thy Faith, so be it done unto Thee.* This is CHRIST's Answer *now*, and thus it is done to every one of us at this Day, as *our Faith is, so is it done unto us.* And here lies the whole Reason of our falling short of the Salvation of CHRIST, it is because we have *No Will* to it.

But you will say, Do not all Christians desire to have CHRIST to be their Saviour? Yes. But here is the Deceit; all would have CHRIST to be their Saviour in the *next World*, and to help them into Heaven when they die, by his Power and Merits with GOD. But this is not *willing* CHRIST to be thy Saviour; for his Salvation, if it is had, must be had in this World; if He saves Thee, it must be done in this Life, by changing and altering *all that is within Thee*, by helping thee to a new Heart, as He helped the Blind to see, the Lame to walk, and the Dumb to speak. For to have Salvation from CHRIST, is nothing else but to be made like unto Him; it is to have his Humility and Meekness, his Mortification and Self-denial, his Renunciation of the Spirit, Wisdom, and Honours of this World,

his Love of GOD, his Desire of doing GOD's Will, and seeking only his Honour. To have these Tempers formed and begotten in thy Heart, is to have Salvation from CHRIST. But if thou *willest not* to have these Tempers brought forth in thee, if thy Faith and Desire does not seek, and cry to CHRIST for them in the *same Reality*, as the Lame asked to walk, and the Blind to see, then thou must be said to be *unwilling* to have CHRIST to be thy Saviour.

Again, Consider, How was it, that the carnal *Jew*, the deep-read *Scribe*, the learned *Rabbi*, the religious *Pharisee*, not only did not receive, but *crucified* their Saviour? It was because they *willed* and *desired* no such Saviour as He was, no such *inward Salvation* as He offered to them. They desired no Change of their own Nature, no inward Destruction of their own natural Tempers, no Deliverance from the Love of themselves, and the Enjoyments of their Passions; they liked their State, the Gratifications of their Old Man, their *long Robes*, their *broad Phylacteries*, and *Greetings* in the Markets. They wanted not to have their *Pride* and *Self-love* dethroned, their Covetousness and sensuality to be subdued by a new Nature from Heaven derived into them. Their only Desire was the Success of *Judaism*,

to

to have an *outward* Saviour, a *temporal* Prince, that ſhould eſtabliſh their *Law* and Ceremonies over all the Earth. And therefore they crucified their Dear Redeemer, and would have none of his Salvation, becauſe it all conſiſted in a change of their Nature, in a *new Birth* from above, and a Kingdom of Heaven to be open *within* them by the Spirit of GOD.

Oh Chriſtendom look not only at the *old Jews*, but ſee thyſelf in this Glaſs. For at this Day (Oh ſad Truth to be told!) at this Day, a CHRIST *within* us, an *inward* Saviour raiſing a *Birth* of his own Nature, Life, and Spirit within us, is rejected as groſs *Enthuſiaſm* the learned *Rabies* take Counſel againſt it. The Propagation of *Popery*, the Propagation of *Proteſtantiſm*, the Succeſs of ſome *particular* Church, is the *Salvation* which Prieſts and People are chiefly concerned about.

But to return. It is manifeſt, that no one can fail of the Benefit of CHRIST's Salvation, but through an *unwillingneſs* to have it, and from the ſame Spirit and Tempers which made the *Jews* unwilling to receive it. But if thou wouldeſt ſtill farther know, how this great Work, the *Birth* of CHRIST, is to be effected in thee, then let this joyful Truth be told thee, that this great Work is *already* begun in every one of us. For this

Holy JESUS, that is to be formed in thee, that is to be the Saviour and new Life of thy Soul, that is to raiſe thee out of the Darkneſs of Death into the Light of Life, and give thee Power to become a Son of GOD, is already *within* thee, living, ſtirring, calling, knocking at the Door of thy Heart, and wanting nothing but thy own *Faith* and *good Will*, to have as real a Birth and Form in thee, as He had in the Virgin *Mary*. For the eternal *Word*, or Son of GOD, did not then firſt begin to be the Saviour of the World when He was born in *Bethlehem* of *Judea*; but that Word which became Man in the Virgin *Mary*, did from the Beginning of the World enter as a *Word* of Life, a *Seed* of Salvation, into the firſt Father of Mankind, being reſerved and treaſured up in him as an ingrafted Word, under the Name and Character of a *Bruiſer of the Serpent's Head*. Hence it is, that CHRIST ſaid to his Diſciples, *The Kingdom of God is within you*; that is, the divine Nature is within you, given unto your firſt Father, into the Light of his Life, and from him, riſing up in the Life of every Son of *Adam*. Hence alſo the holy JESUS is ſaid to be the *Light*, *which lighteth every Man that cometh into the World*. Not as He was born at *Bethlehem*, not as He had an human

human Form upon Earth; in these Respects he could not be said to have been the Light of every Man that cometh into the World; but as he was that *eternal Word*, by which all Things were created, which was the *Life* and *Light* of all Things, and which had as a *second* Creator entered again into fallen Man, as a Bruiser of the Serpent; in this respect it was truly said of our LORD, when on Earth, that *He was that Light which lighteth every Man, that cometh into the World.* For He was really and truly all this, as He was the *Immanuel*, the GOD *with* us, given unto *Adam*, and in him to all his Offspring. See here the beginning and glorious Extent of the *Catholic Church* of CHRIST, it takes in all the World. It is GOD's unlimited universal Mercy to all Mankind; and every human Creature, as sure as he is born of *Adam*, has a Birth of the Bruiser of the Serpent within him, and so is infallibly in Covenant with GOD through JESUS CHRIST. Hence also it is, that the Holy JESUS is appointed to be Judge of all the World, it is because all Mankind, all Nations and Languages have in him, and through him, been put into Covenant with GOD, and made capable of resisting the Evil of their fallen Nature.

When our blessed LORD conversed with the

the Woman at *Jacob's* Well, he ſaid unto her, *If thou kneweſt the Gift of* God, and *who it is that talketh with thee, thou wouldeſt have aſked of Him, and He would have given Thee living Water*. How happy (may any one well ſay) was this Woman of *Samaria*, to ſtand ſo near this *Gift of* God, from whom ſhe might have had living Water, had ſhe but vouchſafed to have aſked for it! But, dear Chriſtian, this Happineſs is thine; for this Holy Jeſus, *the Gift of* God, firſt given into *Adam*, and in him to all that are deſcended from him, is the *Gift of* God *to* Thee, as ſure as thou art born of *Adam*; nay, haſt thou never yet owned him, art thou wandered from him, as far as the Prodigal Son from his Father's Houſe, yet is he ſtill with Thee, he is the Gift of God to Thee, and if thou wilt turn to Him, and aſk of Him, he has living Water for Thee.

Poor Sinner! conſider the Treaſure thou haſt within Thee: The Saviour of the World, the eternal Word of God lies hid in Thee, as a Spark of the Divine Nature, which is to overcome Sin, and Death, and Hell within Thee and generate the Life of Heaven again in thy Soul. Turn to thy Heart, and thy Heart will find its Saviour, its God within itſelf. Thou ſeeſt, heareſt, and feeleſt

eſt nothing of God, becauſe thou ſeekeſt for Him *abroad* with thy outward Eyes, thou ſeekeſt for Him in Books, in Controverſies, in the Church, and outward Exerciſes, but *there* thou wilt not find Him, till thou haſt *firſt* found Him in thy Heart. Seek for Him in thy Heart, and thou wilt never ſeek in vain; for there He dwells, there is the Seat of his Light and Holy Spirit.

For this turning to the Light and Spirit of God within Thee, is thy *only true* turning unto God, there is no other Way of finding Him, but in that Place where he dwelleth in Thee. For though God be every where preſent, yet He is only preſent to Thee in the deepeſt, and moſt central Part of thy Soul. Thy natural *Senſes* cannot poſſeſs God, or unite Thee to Him; nay thy inward Faculties of *Underſtanding*, *Will*, and *Memory*, can only reach after God, but cannot be the *Place* of his Habitation in Thee. But there is a *Root*, or *Depth* in Thee, from whence all theſe Faculties come forth, as Lines from a *Center*, or as Branches from the Body of the Tree. This Depth is called the *Center*, the *Fund* or *Bottom* of the Soul. This Depth is the *Unity*, the *Eternity*, I had almoſt ſaid, the *Infinity* of thy Soul; for it is ſo infinite, that nothing can ſatisfy it, or give it any Reſt,

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but the infinity of GOD. In this *Depth* of the Soul, the Holy Trinity brought forth its own living Image in the firſt created Man, bearing in Himſelf a living Repreſentation of Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, and this was his Dwelling in GOD and GOD in him. This was the Kingdom of GOD *within* Him, and made Paradiſe *without* Him. But the Day that *Adam* did eat of the forbidden earthly Tree, in that Day he abſolutely died to this Kingdom of GOD *within Him*. This *Depth*, or *Center* of his Soul, having loſt its GOD, was ſhut up in Death and Darkneſs, and became a Priſoner in an earthly Animal, that only excelled its Brethren, the Beaſts, in an upright Form, and ſerpentine Subtilty. Thus ended the Fall of Man. But from that Moment that the GOD of Mercy had reſerved and treaſured up in *Adam* the Bruiſer of the Serpent, from that Moment all the Riches and Treaſures of the Divine Nature came again in o Man, as a *Seed* of Salvation ſown into the *Center* of the Soul, and only lies hidden there in every Man, till he deſires to riſe from his fallen State, and to be born again from above.

Awake then, thou that Sleepeſt, and CHRIST, who from all Eternity has been eſpouſed to thy Soul, ſhall give Thee Light. Begin to ſearch and dig in thine own Field for

for this *Pearl of Eternity*, that lies hidden in it; it cannot coſt Thee too much, nor canſt thou buy it too dear, for it is *All*, and when thou haſt found it, thou wilt know, that all which thou haſt ſold or given away for it, is as mere a Nothing, as a Bubble upon the Water.

But if thou turneſt from this heavenly Pearl, or trampleſt it under thy Feet, for the ſake of being Rich, or Great, either in Church or State, if Death finds Thee in *this Succeſs*, thou canſt not then ſay, that though the *Pearl* is loſt, yet *ſomething* has been gained inſtead of it. For in that parting Moment, the *Things* and the *Sounds* of this World will be exactly alike; to have had an *Eſtate*, or only to have *heard* of it, to have lived at *Lambeth* twenty Years, or only to have twenty Times *paſſed by* the Palace, will be the *ſame Good*, or the ſame *Nothing* to Thee.

But I will now ſhew a little more diſtinctly, what this *Pearl of Eternity* is. *Firſt*, It is the *Light* and *Spirit* of God within Thee, which has hitherto done Thee but little Good, becauſe all the Deſire of thy Heart has been after the Light and Spirit of this World. Thy Reaſon, and Senſes, thy Heart and Paſſions, have turned all their Attention to the poor Concerns of this Life, and therefore thou art

a Stranger to this Principle of Heaven, this Riches of Eternity within Thee. For as GOD is not, cannot be truly found by any Worſhippers, but thoſe who worſhip Him in *Spirit* and in *Truth*; ſo this Light and Spirit, though always within us, is not, cannot be found, felt, or enjoyed, but by thoſe whoſe whole Spirit is turned to it.

When Man firſt came into Being, and ſtood before GOD as his own Image and Likeneſs, this *Light* and *Spirit* of GOD was as *natural* to him, as truly the Light of his Nature, as the *Light and Air* of this World is natural to the Creatures that have their Birth in it. But when Man, not content with the Food of Eternity, did eat of the earthly Tree, this Light and Spirit of Heaven was no more *natural* to him, no more roſe up as a Birth of his Nature, but inſtead thereof he was left ſolely to the Light and Spirit of this World. And this is *that Death*, which GOD told *Adam* he ſhould ſurely die, in the Day that he ſhould eat of the forbidden Tree.

But the Goodneſs of God would not leave Man in this Condition. A Redemption from it was immediately granted, and the Bruiſer of the Serpent brought the Light and Spirit of Heaven *once more* into the human Nature, not as it was in its firſt State when Man was

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in Paradiſe, but as a *Treaſure hidden* in the Center of our Souls, which ſhould diſcover, and open itſelf by Degrees, in ſuch Proportion, as the *Faith* and *Deſires* of our Hearts were turned to it. This Light and Spirit of God thus freely reſtored again to the Soul, and lying in it as a *ſecret Source* of Heaven, is called *Grace*, *Free Grace*, or the *Supernatural* Gift, or Power of God in the Soul, becauſe it was ſomething that the Natural Powers of the Soul could no more obtain. Hence it is, that in the greateſt Truth and higheſt Reality, every *ſtirring* of the Soul, every *Tendency* of the Heart towards God and Goodneſs, is *juſtly* and *neceſſarily* aſcribed to the *Holy Spirit*, or the *Grace* of God. It is becauſe this *firſt Seed* of Life, which is ſown into the Soul, as the *Gift* or *Grace* of God to fallen Man, is itſelf the *Light* and *Spirit* of God, and therefore every *Stirring*, or *Opening* of this Seed of Life, every awakened Thought or Deſire that ariſes from it, muſt be called the *Moving*, or the *Quickening* of the Spirit of God; and therefore that new Man which ariſes from it, muſt of all Neceſſity be ſaid to be *ſolely the Work and Operation of* God. Hence alſo we have an eaſy and plain Declaration of the true Meaning, ſolid Senſe, and certain Truth, of all thoſe Scriptures, which

ſpeak

ſpeak of the *Inſpiration* of GOD, the Operation of the *Holy Spirit*, the Power of the *Divine Light*, as the *ſole* and *neceſſary* Agents in the Renewal and Sanctifaction of our Souls, and alſo as being Things *common* to all Men. It is becauſe this *Seed* of Life, or Bruiſer of the Serpent, is *common* to all Men, and has in all Men a *Degree* of Life, which is in itſelf ſo much of the *Inſpiration*, or Life of GOD, the *Spirit* of GOD, the *Light* of GOD, which is in every Soul, and is its Power of becoming born again of God. Hence alſo it is, that all Men are exhorted not to *quench*, or *reſiſt*, or *grieve* the Spirit, that is, this *Seed of the Spirit and Light of* GOD that is in *all* Men, as the only Source of Good. Again, *The Fleſh luſteth againſt the Spirit, and the Spirit againſt the Fleſh.* By the Fleſh and its Luſtings are meant the *mere human Nature*, or the *natural Man*, as He is by the Fall; by the *Spirit* is meant the *Bruiſer of the Serpent*, that Seed of the Light and Spirit of GOD, which lies as a Treaſure hidden in the Soul, in order to bring forth the Life that was loſt in *Adam*. Now as the Fleſh has its Life, its Luſtings, whence all ſorts of Evil are truly ſaid to be inſpired, quickened, and ſtirred up in us, ſo the Spirit, being a *Living* Principle *within us*, has its

Inſpira-

Inſpiration, its *Breathing*, its *Moving*, its *Quickening*, from which alone the Divine Life, or the angel that died in *Adam*, can be born in us.

When this *Seed* of the Spirit, *common* to all Men, is not reſiſted, grieved, and quenched, but its *Inſpirations* and *Motions* ſuffered to grow and increaſe in us, to unite with GOD, and get power over all the Luſts of the Fleſh, then we are born again, the Nature, Spirit, and Tempers of JESUS CHRIST are opened in our Souls, the Kingdom of GOD is come, and is found within us. On the other Hand, when the Fleſh or the *Natural* Man, has reſiſted and quenched this Spirit or Seed of Life within us, then the Works of the Feſh, Adultery, Fornication, Murders, Lying, Hatred, Envy, Wrath, Pride, Fooliſhneſs, worldly Wiſdom, carnal Prudence, falſe Religion, hypocritical Holineſs, and ſerpentine Subtility, have ſet up their Kingdom within us.

See here, in ſhort, the State of Man is redeemed. He has a *Spark* of the Light and Spirit of GOD, as a *Supernatural Gift* of GOD reſerved, and treaſured up in the Birth of his Soul, to bring forth by Degrees a *New Birth* of that Life which was Loſt in Paradiſe. This Holy Spark of the Divine Nature within Him has

a natural, ſtrong, and almoſt infinite Tendency, or Reaching after that eternal Light and Spirit of God, from whence it came forth. It came forth from God, it came *out* of God, it *partaketh* of the Divine Nature, and therefore it is always in a State of Tendency and Return to God. And all this is called the *Breathing*, the *Moving*, the *Quickening* of the Holy Spirit within us, which are ſo many Operations of this Spark of Life tending towards God. On the other Hand, The Deity, as conſidered in itſelf, and *without* the Soul of Man, has an *infinite unchangeable* Tendency of Love and Deſire towards the Soul of Man, to unite and communicate its own Riches and Glories to it, juſt as the Spirit of the *Air without* Man, unites and communicates its Riches and Virtues to the Spirit of the Air that is *within* Man. This Love or Deſire of God towards the Soul of Man, is ſo great, that He gave his only begotten Son, the Brightneſs of his Glory, to take the human Nature upon Him in its fallen State, that by this myſterious Union of God and Man, all the Enemies of the Soul of Man might be overcome, and every human Creature might have a Power of being born again, according to that Image of God, in which he was firſt created. The Goſpel is the Hiſtory of this

Love

Love of God to Man. Inwardly he has a *Seed* of the Divine Life in the Birth of his Soul, a Seed that has all the *Riches of Eternity* in it, and is always wanting to come to the Birth in him, and be alive in GOD. Outwardly he has JESUS CHRIST, who as a *Sun* of Righteouſneſs is always caſting forth his enlivening Beams on this *inward Seed*, to kindle and call it forth to the Birth, doing that to this Seed of Heaven in Man, which the Sun in the Firmament is always doing to the vegetable Seeds in the Earth.

Conſider this Matter in the following Similitude. A *Grain* of Wheat has the *Air* and *Light* of this World incloſed, or incorporated in it: This is the Myſtery of its Life, this is its Power of growing, by this it has a ſtrong continual Tendency of uniting again with that *Ocean* of Light and Air from whence it came forth, and ſo it helps to kindle its own Vegetable Life.

On the other Hand, That great *Ocean* of Light and Air, having its own *Offspring* hidden in the Heart of the Grain, has a perpetual ſtrong Tendency to unite, and communicate with it again. For this Deſire of Union on *both Sides* the Vegetable Life ariſes, with all the Virtues and Powers contained in it.

But here let it be well obſerved, that this

Desire on both Sides cannot have its Effect, till the *Husk* and gross Part of the Grain falls into a State of Corruption and Death, till this begins, the Mystery of Life hidden in it cannot come forth. The Application here may be left to the Reader, I shall only observe, that we may here see the true Ground, and absolute Necessity, of that dying to ourselves and to the World, to which our Blessed Lord so constantly calls all his Followers. An universal Self-Denial, a perpetual Mortification of the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes and the Pride of Life, is not a thing imposed upon us by the *mere Will* of GOD, is not required as a *Punishment*, is not an Invention of dull and *monkish* Spirits, but has its *Ground* and *Reason* in the Nature of the Thing, and is as absolutely necessary to make Way for the New Birth, as the Death of the *Husk* and gross Part of the grain, is necessary to make Way for its Vegetable Life.

But *Secondly*, This *Pearl of Eternity* is the *Wisdom* and *Love* of GOD within Thee. In this Pearl of thy Serpent Bruiser, all the Holy Nature, Spirit, Tempers, and Inclinations of CHRIST, lie as in a Seed in the Center of thy Soul, and divine Wisdom and heavenly Love will grow up in Thee, if thou givest but true Attention to GOD present in thy Soul. On the

the other Hand, There is hidden alſo in the Depth of thy Nature the *Root*, or *Poſſibility* of all the helliſh Nature, Spirit, and Tempers of the fallen Angels. For Heaven and Hell have each of them their *Foundation* within us, they come not into us from *without*, but ſpring up in us, according as our *Will* and *Heart* is turned either to the Light of GOD, or the Kingdom of Darkneſs. But when this Life, which is in the midſt of theſe two Eternities, is at an End, either an Angel or a Devil will be found to have a *Birth* in us.

Thou needeſt not therefore run here, or there, *ſaying, Where is Chriſt? Thou needeſt not ſay, Who ſhall aſcend into Heaven, that is, to bring down Chriſt from above? Or, Who ſhall deſcend into the Deep, to bring up Chriſt from the Dead?* For behold the *Word*, which is the Wiſdom of GOD, is in thy Heart, it is there as a Bruiſer of thy Serpent, as a Light unto thy Feet and Lanthorn unto thy Paths. It is there as an *Holy Oil*, to ſoften and overcome the wrathful fiery Properties of thy Nature, and change them into the humble Meekneſs of Light and Love. It is there as a *ſpeaking Word* of GOD in thy Soul; and as ſoon as thou art ready to hear, this eternal ſpeaking Work will ſpeak Wiſdom and Love in thy inward Parts, and bring forth the

Birth of CHRIST, with all his holy Nature, Spirit, and Tempers within Thee. Hence it was (that is from this principle of Heaven, or CHRIST in the Soul) hence I ſay it was that ſo many eminent Spirits, Partakers of a Divine Life, have appeared in ſo many Parts of the heathen World; glorious Names, Sons of Wiſdom, that ſhone, as Lights hung out by GOD, in the midſt of idolatrous Darkneſs. Theſe were the Apoſtles of a *Chriſt within*, that were awakened and commiſſioned by the *inward Bruiſer* of the Serpent, to call Mankind from the blind Purſuits of Fleſh and Blood, to know themſelves, the Dignity of their Nature, the Immortality of their Souls, and the Neceſſity of Virtue to avoid eternal Shame and Miſery. Theſe *Apoſtles*, though they had not the *Law*, or *written Goſpel* to urge upon their Hearers, yet having turned to GOD, they found, and preached the Goſpel that was written in their Hearts. Hence one of them could ſay this Divine Truth, *viz.* That *ſuch only are Prieſts and Prophets, who have God in themſelves.* Hence alſo it is, that in the Chriſtian Church, there have been in all ages, amongſt the moſt illiterate, both Men and Women, who have attained to a deep Underſtanding of the Myſteries of the Wiſdom and Love of GOD

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in CHRIST JESUS. And what wonder? Since it is not Art or Science, or Skill in Grammar or Logic, but the Opening of the Divine Life in the Soul, that can give true Underſtanding of the Things of GOD. This Life of GOD in the Soul, which for its Smallneſs at firſt, and Capacity for great Growth, is by our LORD compared to a Grain of Muſtard Seed, may be, and too generally is ſuppreſſed and kept under, either by worldly Cares, or Pleaſures, by vain Learning, Senſuality, or Ambition. And all this while, whatever Church, or Profeſſion any Man is of, he is a mere *Natural* Man, *unregenerate*, *unenlightened* by the Spirit of GOD, becauſe this Seed of Heaven is choaked, and not ſuffered to grow up in him. And therefore his *Religion* is no more from Heaven than his *fine Breeding*; his *Cares* have no more Goodneſs in them than his *Pleaſures*; his Love is worth no more than his *Hatred*; his Zeal for this, or againſt that Form of Religion, has only the Nature of any other worldly Contention in it. And thus it is, and muſt be with every mere natural Man; whatever Appearances he may put on, he may, if he pleaſes, know himſelf to be the Slave, and Machine of his own corrupt Tempers and Inclinations, to be enlightened, inſpired, quick-

ened and animated by Self-love, Self-eſteem, and Self-ſeeking, which is the only Life and Spirit of the mere natural Man, whether he be *Heathen*, *Jew*, or *Chriſtian*.

On the other Hand, Where-ever this Seed of Heaven is ſuffered to take Root, to get Life and Breath in the Soul, whether it be in Man, or Woman, young or old, there this new born inward Man is juſtly ſaid to be *inſpired, enlightened, and moved* by the Spirit of GOD, becauſe his whole Birth and Life is a Birth from above of the Light and Spirit of GOD; and therefore all that is in him has the Nature, Spirit, and Tempers of Heaven in it. As this regenerate Life grows up in any Man, ſo there grows up a true and real Knowledge of the whole Myſtery of Godlineſs in himſelf. All that the Goſpel teaches of Sin and Grace, of Life and Death, of Heaven and Hell, of the New and Old Man, of the Light and Spirit of GOD, are Things not got by *Hearſay*, but inwardly known, felt, and experienced in the Growth of his own new born Life. He has then an *Unction* from above which teaches him all Things, a Spirit that *knows what it ought to pray for*, a Spirit that *prays without ceaſing*, that is riſen with CHRIST from the Dead, and has all its Converſation in Heaven, a Spirit that has *Groans and Sighs*

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that cannot be uttered, that travaileth and groaneth with the whole Creation to be delivered from Vanity, and have its glorious Liberty in that GOD from whom it came forth.

Again, *Thirdly*, This *Pearl* of Eternity is the *Church*, or Temple of GOD *within Thee*, the conſecrated Place of Divine Worſhip, where alone thou canſt worſhip GOD in *Spirit, and in Truth*. *In Spirit*, becauſe thy Spirit is that alone in Thee, which can unite, and cleave unto GOD, and receive the Working of his Divine Spirit upon Thee. *In Truth* becauſe this *Adoration* in Spirit is that *Truth*, and *Reality*, of which all outward *Forms* and *Rites*, though inſtituted by God, are only the *Figure* for a Time, but this Worſhip is Eternal. Accuſtom thyſelf to the Holy Service of this inward Temple. In the midſt of it is the Fountain of Living Water, of which thou mayeſt drink and live for ever. There the Myſteries of thy Redemption are celebrated, or rather opened in Life and Power. There the Supper of the Lamb is kept; the *Bread that came down from Heaven, that giveth Life to the World*, is thy true Nouriſhment; all is done and known in real experience, in a living Senſibility of the Work of GOD on the Soul. There the Birth, the Life,

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the Sufferings, the Death, the Reſurrection and Aſcenſion of CHRIST, are not merely remembered, but inwardly found, and enjoyed as the real States of thy Soul, which has followed CHRIST in the Regeneration. When once thou art well grounded in this *inward Worſhip*, thou wilt have learnt to live unto GOD *above Time* and *Place*. For every Day will be *Sunday* to thee, and where-ever thou goeſt, thou wilt have a *Prieſt*, a *Church*, and and *Altar* along with Thee. For when GOD has all that He ſhould have of thy Heart, when renouncing the Will, Judgment, Tempers and Inclinations of thy *old Man*, thou art wholly given up to the Obedience of the Light and Spirit of GOD within Thee, to *Will* only in his Will, to *Love* only in his Love, to be *Wiſe* only in his Wiſdom, then it is that every Thing thou doeſt is as a Song of Praiſe, and the common Buſineſs of thy Life is a conforming to God's Will on Earth as Angels do in Heaven.

Fourthly, and *Laſtly*, This *Pearl* of Eternity is the *Peace* and *Joy* of GOD within Thee, but can be only found by the Manifeſtation of the Life and Power of JESUS CHRIST in thy Soul. But CHRIST cannot be thy Power and thy Life, till in Obedience to his Call *thou denieſt thyſelf, takeſt up thy daily Croſs, and follow-*

followeſt Him, in the Regeneration. This is peremtory, it admits of no Reſerve or Evaſion, it is the one Way to CHRIST and Eternal Life. But be where thou wilt, either *Here*, or at *Rome*, or *Geneva*, if *Self* is undenied, if thou liveſt to thine *own Will*, to the Pleaſures of thy natural Luſt and Appetites, Senſes and Paſſions, and in Conformity to the vain Cuſtoms and Spirit of this World, thou art dead whilſt thou liveſt, the Seed of the Woman is crucified within Thee, CHRIST can profit thee Nothing, thou art a Stranger to all that is holy and heavenly within Thee, and utterly incapable of finding the *Peace* and *Joy* of GOD in thy Soul. And thus thou art *Poor*, and *Blind*, and *Naked*, and *Empty*, and liveſt a miſerable Life in the Vanity of Time; whilſt all the Riches of Eternity, the Light and Spirit, the Wiſdom and Love, the Peace and Joy of GOD, are within Thee. And thus it will always be with Thee, there is no Remedy, go where thou wilt, do what thou wilt, all is ſhut up, there is no open Door of Salvation, no Awakening out of the Sleep of Sin, no Deliverance from the Power of thy corrupt Nature, no Overcoming of the World, no Revelation of JESUS CHRIST, no Joy of the New Birth from above, till dying to thy Self and the World, thou turneſt

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to the Light, and Spirit, and Power of God in thy Soul. All is fruitleſs and inſignificant, all the Means of thy Redemption are at a Stand, all outward Forms are but a dead Formality, till this Fountain of Living Water is found within Thee.

But thou wilt perhaps ſay, How ſhall I diſcover this Riches of Eternity, this Light, and Spirit and Wiſdom, and Peace of God, treaſured up within me? Thy *firſt Thought* of Repentance, or *Deſire* of turning to God, is thy *firſt Diſcovery* of this Light and Spirit of God within Thee. It is the Voice and Language of the *Word* of God within Thee, though thou knoweſt it not. It is the Bruiſer of thy Serpent's Head, thy Dear *Immanuel* who is beginning to preach *within* Thee, that ſame which He firſt preached in public, ſaying, *Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand.* When therefore but the ſmalleſt Inſtinct or Deſire of thy Heart calls Thee towards God, and a newneſs of Life, give it Time and Leave to ſpeak; and take care thou refuſe not him that ſpeaketh. For it is not an Angel from Heaven that ſpeaks to Thee, but it is the eternal *ſpeaking Word* of God in thy Heart; that Word which at firſt created Thee, is thus beginning to create Thee a *ſecond Time* unto righteouſneſs, that a new Man

Man may be formed again in Thee, in the Image and Likeneſs of GOD. But above all Things, beware of taking this *Deſire* of Repentance to be the Effect of thy own Natural *Senſe* and *Reaſon*, for in ſo doing thou loſeſt the *Key* of all the Heavenly Treaſure that is in Thee, thou ſhutteſt the Door againſt GOD, turneſt away from Him, and thy Repentance (if thou haſt any) will be only a vain unprofitable Work of thy own Hands, that will do Thee no more Good, than a *Well* that is without Water. But if thou takeſt this *awakened Deſire* of turning to GOD, to be, as in Truth it is, the coming of CHRIST in thy Soul, the *Working*, *Redeeming* Power of the Light and Spirit of the Holy JESUS within Thee, if thou doſt reverence and adhere to it as ſuch, this *Faith will ſave Thee, will make Thee whole*; and by thus believing in CHRIST, though thou wert dead, yet ſhalt thou live.

Now all depends upon thy right Submiſſion and Obedience to this ſpeaking of GOD in thy Soul. Stop therefore all Self-activity, liſten not to the Suggeſtions of thy own Reaſon, run not on in thy own Will, but be retired, ſilent, paſſive, and humbly attentive to this new riſen Light within Thee. Open thy Heart, thy Eyes, and Ears, to all its Impreſſions.

ſions. Let it enlighten, teach frighten, torment, judge, and condemn Thee, as it pleaſes, turn not away from it, hear all it ſays, ſeek for no Relief out of it, conſult not with Fleſh and Blood, but with a Heart full of Faith and Reſignation to God, pray only this Prayer, that God's Kingdom may come, and his Will be done in thy Soul. Stand faithfully in this State of Preparation, thus given up to the Spirit of God, and then the Work of thy Repentance will be wrought in God, and thou wilt ſoon find, that He that is in Thee, is much greater than all that are againſt Thee.

But that thou mayſt do all this the better, and be more firmly aſſured, that this *Reſignation* to, and *Dependance* upon the workings of God's Spirit within Thee, is right and ſound, I ſhall lay before Thee two great, and infallible, and fundamental Truths, which will be a Rock for thy Faith to ſtand upon.

Firſt, That through all the whole Nature of Things, nothing can *do*, or *be* a real Good to thy Soul, but the *Operation of God* upon it. *Secondly*, That all the Diſpenſations of God to Mankind, from the Fall of *Adam* to the Preaching of the Goſpel, were only for this *one End*, to fit, prepare, and

and diſpoſe the Soul for the *Operation* of the Spirit of God upon it. Theſe two great Truths, well and deeply apprehended, put the Soul in its right State, in a continual Dependance upon God, in a Readineſs to receive all Good from Him, and will be a continual Source of Light in thy Mind. They will keep Thee ſafe from all Errors, and falſe Zeal in Things, and Forms of Religion, from a Sectarian Spirit, from Bigotry, and Superſtition; they will teach Thee the true Difference between the Means and End of Religion; and the Regard thou ſheweſt to the *Shell* will be only ſo far as the *Kernel* is to be found in it.

Man, by his Fall, had broke off from his true *Center*, his proper Place in God, and therefore the Life and Operation of God was no more in Him. He was fallen from a Life in God into a Life of *Self*, into an animal Life of Self-love, Self-eſteem, and Self-ſeeking, in the poor periſhing Enjoyments of this World. This was the *Natural State* of Man by the Fall. He was an Apoſtate from God; and his natural Life was all Idolatry, where *Self* was the great Idol that was worſhipped inſtead of God. See here the whole Truth in ſhort. All Sin, Death, Damnation, and Hell, is nothing elſe but this Kingdom

dom of *Self*, or the various Operations of Self-love, Self-eſteem, and Self-ſeeking, which ſeparate the Soul from GOD, and end in eternal Death and Hell.

On the other Hand, all that is *Grace*, *Redemption*, *Salvation*, *Sanctification*, *Spiritual Life*, and the *New Birth*, is nothing elſe but ſo much of the Life, and Operation of GOD found again in the Soul. It is Man come back again into his *Center* or *Place* in GOD, from whence he had broke off. The Beginning again of the Life of GOD in the Soul was then firſt made, when the Mercy of GOD had reſerved and treaſured up in *Adam* a *Seed* of the Divine Life, which ſhould bruiſe the Head of the Serpent, which had wrought itſelf into the human Nature. Here the Kingdom of GOD was again within us, though only as a *Seed*; yet ſmall as it was, it was yet a *Degree* of the Divine Life, which if rightly cultivated, would overcome all the Evil that was in us, and make of every fallen Man a new born Son of GOD.

All the Sacrifices and Inſtitutions of the antient Patriarchs, the *Law* of *Moſes*, with all its Types, and Rites, and Ceremonies, had this *only End*; they were the Methods of Divine Wiſdom for a Time, to keep the Hearts of Men from the Wanderings of Idolatry,

Idolatry, in a State of *Holy Expectation* upon GOD they were to keep the *firſt Seed* of Life in a State of Growth and make Way for the farther Operation of GOD upon the Soul; or as the Apoſtle ſpeaks; to be as a *Schoolmaſter unto Chriſt*, that is, till the Birth, the Death, the Reſurrection and Aſcenſion of CHRIST, ſhould conquer Death and Hell, open a new Diſpenſation of GOD, and baptize Mankind afreſh from the Holy Ghoſt, and Fire of Heaven. Then, that is, on the Day of *Pentecoſt*, a *new Diſpenſation* of GOD came forth, which on GOD's Part, was the Operation of the Holy Spirit in Gifts and Graces upon the whole Church. and on Man's Part, it was the Adoration of GOD in *Spirit* and *in Truth*. Thus all that was done by GOD, from the Bruiſer of the Serpent given to *Adam* to CHRIST's ſitting down on the right Hand of GOD, was all for this End, to remove all that ſtood between GOD and Man, and to make Way for the *immediate* and *continual* Operation of GOD upon the Soul; and that Man, baptized with the Holy Spirit, and born again from Above, ſhould abſolutely renounce *Self*, and wholly give up his Soul to the Operation of GOD's Spirit, to know, to love, to will, to pray, to worſhip, to preach,

to exhort, to uſe all the Faculties of his Mind, and all the outward Things of this World, as enlightened, inſpired, moved and guided by the Holy Ghoſt, who by this laſt Diſpenſation of GOD, was given to be a Comforter, a Teacher, and Guide to the Church, who ſhould abide with it for ever.

This is Chriſtianity, a ſpiritual Society, not becauſe it has no worldly Concerns, but becauſe all its Members, as ſuch, are born of the Spirit, kept alive, animated, and governed by the Spirit of GOD. It is conſtantly called by our LORD the Kingdom of GOD, or Heaven, becauſe all its *Miniſtry* and *Service*, all that is done in it, is done in Obedience and Subjection to *that Spirit* by which Angels live, and are governed in Heaven *. Hence our bleſſed LORD taught his Diſciples to pray, that this Kingdom might come, that ſo GOD's Will might be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven; which could not be, but by that ſame Spirit by which it is done in Heaven. The ſhort is this: The Kingdom of *Self* is the Fall of Man, or the great Apoſtaſy from the Life of GOD in the Soul; and every one, wherever he be, that lives unto *Self*, is ſtill under the Fall and great Apoſtaſy from GOD. The King-

* Way to Divine Knowledge, &c. p. 77.

Kingdom of CHRIST is the Spirit and Power of GOD dwelling and manifesting itself in the Birth of a new inward Man; and no one is a Member of this Kingdom, but *so far* as a true Birth of the Spirit is brought forth in him. These two Kingdoms take in all Mankind, he that is not of one, is certainly in the other: Dying to one is Living to the other.

Hence we may gather these following Truths: *First*, Here is shewn the true Ground and Reason of what was said above, namely, That when the *Call* of GOD to Repentance first arises in thy Soul, thou art to be *retired*, *silent*, *passive*, and humbly attentive to this new risen Light within thee, by wholly stopping, or disregarding the Workings of thy own Will, Reason, and Judgment. It is because all these are false Counsellors, the sworn Servants, bribed Slaves of thy fallen Nature, they are all Born and Bred in the Kingdom of *Self*; and therefore if a new Kingdom is to be set up in thee, if the Operation of GOD is to have its Effect in thee, all these natural Powers of *Self* are to be silenced and suppressed, till they have learned Obedience and Subjection to the Spirit of GOD. Now this is not requiring thee to become a *Fool*, or to give up

thy Claim to Senſe and Reaſon, but is the ſhorteſt Way to have thy Senſe and Reaſon delivered from Folly, and thy whole rational Nature ſtrengthened, enlightened, and guided by that Light which is Wiſdom itſelf.

A Child that obediently denies his own Will, and own Reaſon, to be guided by the Will and Reaſon of a truly wiſe and underſtanding Tutor, cannot be ſaid to make himſelf a Fool, and give up the Benefit of his rational Nature, but to have taken the ſhorteſt Way to have his own Will and Reaſon made truly a Bleſſing to him.

Secondly, Hence is to be ſeen the true Ground and Neceſſity of that univerſal Mortification and Self-denial with regard to all our Senſes, Appetites, Tempers, Paſſions, and Judgments. It is becauſe all our whole Nature has fallen from the Life of GOD, is in a State of Contrariety to the Order and End of our Creation, a continual Source of diſorderly Appetites, corrupt Tempers, and falſe Judgments. And therefore every Motion of it is to be mortified, changed, and purified from its *natural State*, before we can enter into the Kingdom of GOD. Thus when our LORD ſays, *Except a Man hateth his Father*

Father and Mother, yea, and his own Life, he cannot be my Diſciple; it is becauſe our beſt Tempers are yet *carnal*, and full of the *Imperfections* of our fallen Nature. The Doctrine is juſt and good; not as if *Father* and *Mother* were to be hated; but *that Love* which an unregenerate Perſon, or *natural Man*, has towards them, is to be *hated*, as being a blind *Self-love*, full of all the *Weakneſs* and *Partiality* with which fallen Man loves, honours, eſteems, and cleaves to himſelf. This Love, *born* from corrupt Fleſh and Blood, and *polluted* with Self, is to be *hated* and *Parted* with, that we may love them with a Love *born* of GOD, with ſuch a Love and on ſuch a Motive, as CHRIST has loved us. And then the *Diſciple* of CHRIST far exceeds all others in the Love of Parents. Again, our *own Life* is to be *hated*; and the Reaſon is plain, it is becauſe there is nothing lovely in it. It is a *Legion* of Evil, a monſtrous Birth of the *Serpent*, the *World*, and the *Fleſh*; it is an *Apoſtaſy* from the *Life* and *Power* of GOD in the Soul, a Life that is *Death* to Heaven, that is pure unmixed *Idolatry*, that lives wholly to *Self*, and not to GOD; and therefore *all this own Life* is to be abſolutely *hated*, all this Self is to be *denied* and *mortified*, if the Nature, Spirit, Tempers, and

Inclinations of CHRIST are to be brought to Life in us. For it is as impoſſible to live to both theſe Lives at once, as for a *Body* to move two contrary Ways at the ſame Time. And therefore all theſe Mortifications and Self-denials have an abſolute Neceſſity in the Nature of the Thing itſelf.

Thus when our LORD further ſays, Unleſs a Man forſaketh *all that he hath, he cannot be my Diſciple*; the Reaſon is plain, and the Neceſſity abſolute. It is becauſe *all* that the *natural* Man has, is in the Poſſeſſion of *Self-love*, and therefore *this Poſſeſſion* is to be abſolutely *forſaken* and parted with. All that he has is to be put into other Hands to be given to divine Love, or this *natural Man* cannot be changed into a *Diſciple* of CHRIST. For Self-love in *all that it has* is earthly, ſenſual, and deviliſh, and therefore muſt have *all* taken away from it; and then to the *natural* Man *all* is loſt, he has *nothing* left, all is laid down at the Feet of JESUS. And then all Things are common, as ſoon as *Self-love* has loſt the Poſſeſſion of them. And then the Diſciple of CHRIST, *though having nothing, yet poſſeſſeth all Things*; all that the *natural* Man has *forſaken* is reſtored to the *Diſciple* of CHRIST an *hundred-fold*. For Self-love, the greateſt of all *Thieves*, being

now

now caſt out, and all that he had ſtolen and hidden thus taken from him, and put into the Hands of divine Love, every *Mite* becomes a large Treaſure, and Mammon opens the Door into everlaſting Habitations. This was the Spirit of the *firſt Draught* of a Chriſtian Church at *Jeruſalem*, a Church made truly after the Pattern of Heaven, where the Love that reigns in Heaven reigned in it, where divine Love broke down all the ſelfiſh Fences, the Locks and Bolts of *me*, *mine*, *my own*, &c. and laid all things common to the Members of this new Kingdom of GOD on Earth.

Now though many Years did not paſs after the Age of the Apoſtles, before *Satan* and *Self* got footing in the Church, and ſet up Merchandize in the Houſe of GOD, yet this *one Heart*, and *one Spirit*, which then firſt appeared in the *Jeruſalem* Church, is that *one Heart* and *Spirit* of divine Love, to which *all are* called that would be true Diſcipes of CHRIST. And though the Practice of it is loſt as to the Church in general, yet it ought not to have been loſt; and therefore every Chriſtian ought to make it his great Care and Prayer, to have it reſtored in himſelf. And then, though born in the Dregs of Time, or living in *Babylon*, he will be as truly a Member of the firſt heavenly Church at *Jeruſalem*,

as if he had lived in it in the Days of the Apoſtles. This Spirit of Love, born of that celeſtial Fire, with which CHRIST baptizes his true Diſciples, is alone that Spirit which can enter into Heaven, and therefore is that Spirit which is to be born in us whilſt we are on Earth. For no one can enter into Heaven, till he is made heavenly, till the Spirit of Heaven is entered into him. And therefore all that our LORD has ſaid of denying and dying to *Self*, and of a Man's parting with all that he has, are Practices abſolutely neceſſary from the Nature of the Thing.

Becauſe all turning to Self, is ſo far turning *from* GOD, and ſo much as we have of Self-love, ſo much we have of a helliſh earthly Weight, that muſt be taken off, or there can be no Aſcenſion into Heaven. But thou wilt perhaps ſay, If *all Self-love* is to be renounced, then all Love of our Neighbour is renounced along with it, becauſe the Commandment is, only *to Love our Neighbour as ourſelves*. The Anſwer here is eaſy, and yet no Quarter given to Self-love. There is but *one only* Love in Heaven, and yet the Angels of GOD love one another in the *ſame manner* as they love themſelves. The Matter is thus: The one ſupreme unchangeable *Rule* of Love, which is a *Law* to all intelligent

Beings

Beings of all Worlds and will be a Law to all Eternity, is this, *viz. That God alone is to be loved for himself*, and *all other Beings only* in *Him, and for Him.* Whatever intelligent Creature lives not under this Rule of Love, is so far fallen from the Order of his Creation, and is, till he returns to this eternal Law of Love, an *Apostate* from GOD, and incapable of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Now if GOD alone is to be loved for *Himself*, then no Creature is to be loved for *itself*; and so all *Self-love*, in every Creature is absolutely condemned.

And if all created Beings are only to be loved *in* and *for* GOD, then my Neighbour is to be loved, *as* I love myself, and I am only to love myself, as I love my Neighbour, or any other created Being, that is, only *in* and *for* GOD. And thus the Command, of loving our Neighbour as ourselves, stands firm, and yet all Self-love is plucked up by the Roots. But what is loving any Creature only *in*, and *for* God? It is when we love it only as it is GOD's *Work*, *Image*, and *Delight*, when we love it merely as it is GOD's, and belongs to him, this is loving it *in* GOD; and when all that we wish, intend, or to do it, is done from a Love of GOD, for the Honour of GOD, and in Conformity to the Will of GOD,

GOD, this is loving it *for* GOD. This is the *one Love* that is, and muſt be the Spirit of all Creatures, that live united to GOD. Now this is no ſpeculative Refinement, or fine-ſpun Fiction of the Brain, but the ſimple Truth, a firſt Law of Nature, and a neceſſary Band of Union between GOD and the Creature. The Creature is not in GOD, is a Stranger to Him, has loſt the Life of GOD in itſelf, whenever its Love does not thus begin and end in GOD.

The Loſs of this Love was the *Fall* of Man, as it opened in him a Kingdom of *Self*, in which Satan, the World, and the Fleſh, could all of them bring forth their own Works*. If therefore Man is to riſe from his Fall, and return to his Life in GOD, there is an abſolute neceſſity that *Self*, with all his Brood of groſs Affections, be depoſed, that his firſt Love, in and for which he was created may be born again in him. CHRIST came into the World to *ſave Sinners*, to deſtroy the Works of the Devil. Now *Self* is not only the Seat and Habitation, but the very *Life* of Sin. The Works of the Devil are all wrought in *Self*, it is his peculiar *Workhouſe*, and therefore CHRIST is not come as a Saviour from Sin, as a Deſtroyer of the Works of the Devil in any of us, but *ſo far* as Self is beaten down and overcome in us. If it is literally true

* Spirit of Prayer, Part II. p. 12—22.

true what our LORD ſaid, *That his Kingdom was not of this World*, then it is a Truth of the ſame Certainty, that no one is a Member of this Kingdom, but he that in the literal Senſe of the Words renounces the Spirit of this World. Chriſtians might as well part with half the Articles of their Creed, or but half believe them, as really to refuſe, or but by halves enter into theſe Self-denials.

For all that is in the *Creed*, is only to bring forth this Dying and Death to all and every Part of the old Man, that the Life and Spirit of CHRIST may be formed in us.

Our Redemption is *this new Birth*; if this is not done, or doing in us, we are ſtill unredeemed. And though the Saviour of the World is come, He is not come in us, He is not received by us, is a Stranger to us, is not ours, if his Life is not within us. His Life is not, cannot be within us, but ſo far as the Spirit of the World, Self-love, Self-eſteem, and Self-ſeeking, are renounced and driven out of us.

Thirdly, Hence we may alſo learn the true Nature and Worth of all *Self-denials* and *Mortifications*. As to their Nature, conſidered in themſelves, they have nothing of *Goodneſs* or *Holineſs*, nor are any real Parts of our Sanctification, they are not the true *Food* or *Nouriſh-*

Nouriſhment of the divine Life in our Souls, they have no *Quickening Sanctifying Power* in them; their only Worth conſiſts in this, that they remove the Impediments of Holineſs, break down that which ſtands between God and us, and make Way for the *Quickening Sanctifying* Spirit of God to operate on our Souls. Which Operation of God is the *one only* Thing that can raiſe the divine Life in the Soul, or help it to the ſmalleſt Degree of real Holineſs, or Spiritual Life. As in our Creation we had only that *Degree* of a divine Life, which the Power of God derived into us; as then all that we had and were was the *ſole Operation* of God in the Creation of us; ſo in our Redemption, or regaining that firſt Perfection which we have loſt, all muſt be again the Operation of God; *every Degree* of the divine Life reſtored in us, be it ever ſo ſmall, muſt and can be nothing elſe but ſo much of the Life and Operation of God found again in the Soul. All the Activity of Man in the Works of Self-denial has no Good in itſelf, but is only to open an Entrance for the *one only* Good, the Light of God, to operate upon us.

Hence alſo we may learn the Reaſon, why many People not only loſe the Benefit, but are even the worſe for all their Mortifications.

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It is becauſe they miſtake the whole Nature and Worth of them. They practiſe them for their *own Sakes*, as Things good in themſelves, they think them to be *real* Parts of Holineſs, and ſo *reſt* in them and look no *farther*, but grow full of Self-eſteem and Self-admiration for their own Progreſs in them. This makes them Self-ſufficient, moroſe, ſevere Judges of all thoſe that fall ſhort of their Mortifications.

And thus their *Self-denials* do only *that* for them, which *Indulgences* do for other People, they withſtand and hinder the Operation of God upon their Souls, and inſtead of being *really* Self-denials, they ſtrengthen and keep up the Kingdom of *Self*.

There is no avoiding this fatal Error, but by deeply entering into this great Truth, that all our own Activity and Working has no Good in it; can do no Good to us, but as it leads and turns us in the beſt Manner to the Light and Spirit of God, which alone brings Life and Salvation into the Soul. *Stretch forth thy Hand*, ſaid our Lord to the Man *that had a withered Hand*; he did ſo, and *it was immediately made whole as the other*.

Now had this Man any Ground for Pride, or a high Opinion of himſelf, for the Share he had in the Reſtoring of his Hand? Yet

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juſt ſuch is our Share in the Raiſing up of the Spiritual Life within us. All that we can do by our own Activity is only like this Man's ſtretching out his Hand; the reſt is the Work of CHRIST, the only Giver of Life to the withered Hand, or the dead Soul. We can only then do living Works, when we are ſo far born again, as to be able to ſay with the Apoſtle, *Yet not I but Chriſt that liveth in me.* But to return, and farther ſhew, how the Soul that feels the Call of GOD to Repentance is to behave under it, that this ſtirring of the divine Power in the Soul may have its full Effect, and bring forth the Birth of the new Man in CHRIST JESUS. We are to conſider it (as in Truth it is) as the *Seed* of the divine Nature within us, that can only grow by its *own Strength* and *Union* with GOD. It is a divine Life, and therefore can grow from nothing but divine Power. When the Virgin *Mary* conceived the Birth of the holy JESUS, all that ſhe did towards it herſelf, was only this ſingle Act of Faith and Reſignation to GOD; *Behold the Handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy Word.* This is all that we can do towards the Conception of that new Man that is to be born in ourſelves. Now this Truth is

eaſily

eaſily conſented to, and a Man thinks he believes it, becauſe he conſents to it, or rather, does not deny it. But this is not enough, it is to be apprehended in a deep, full, and practical Aſſurance, in ſuch a Manner as a Man knows and believes that he did not create the *Stars*, or cauſe Life to riſe up in himſelf. And then it is a Belief that puts the Soul into a right State, that makes room for the Operation of GOD upon it. His Light then enters with full Power into the Soul, and his holy Spirit moves and directs all that is done in it, and ſo Man lives again in GOD as a new Creature. For this Truth, thus firmly believed, will have theſe two moſt excellent Effects: *Firſt*, It will keep the Soul fixed, and continually turned towards GOD, in Faith, Prayer, Deſire, Confidence, and Reſignation to Him, for all that it wants to have done in it, and to it; which will be a continual Source of all divine Virtues and Graces. The Soul thus turned to GOD muſt be always receiving from Him. It ſtands at the true Door of all divine Communications, and the Light of GOD as freely enters into it, as the Light of the *Sun* enters into the *Air*. *Secondly*, It will fix and ground the Soul in a true and laſting Self-denial. For by thus knowing

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and owning our own *Nothingneſs* and Inability, that we have no other Capacity for Good but that of receiving it from GOD alone, *Self* is wholly denied, its Kingdom is deſtroyed; no room is left for ſpiritual Pride and Self-eſteem; we are ſaved from a Phariſaical Holineſs, from wrong Opinions of our own Works and good Deeds, and from a Multitude of Errors the moſt dangerous to our Souls, all which ariſe from the *Something* that we take ourſelves to be either in Nature or Grace. But when we once apprehend but in ſome good Degree, the *All* of GOD, and the *Nothingneſs* of ourſelves, we have got a Truth, whoſe Uſefulneſs and Benefit no Words can expreſs. It brings a Kind of Infallibility into the Soul in which it dwells; all that is vain, and falſe, and deceitful, is forced to vaniſh and fly before it. When our Religion is founded on this Rock, it has the Firmneſs of a Rock, and its Height reaches unto Heaven. The World, the Fleſh, and the Devil, can do no hurt to it; all Enemies are known, and all diſarmed, by this great Truth dwelling in our Souls. It is the Knowledge of the *All* of GOD, that makes *Cherubims* and *Seraphims* to be Flames of divine Love. For where this *All* of GOD is truly known. and felt in any Creature, there its whole Breath and Spirit

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is a Fire of Love, nothing but a pure disinterested Love can arise up in it, or come from it, a Love that begins and ends in God. And where this Love is born in any Creature, there a Seraphick Life is born along with it. For this pure Love introduces the Creature into the *All* of God; all that is in God is opened in the Creature, it is united with God, and has the Life of God manifested in it.

There is but *one Salvation* for all Mankind, and that is the *Life* of God in the Soul. God has but *one Design* or Intent towards all Mankind, and that is to *introduce* or *generate* his own Life, Light, and Spirit in them, that all may be as so many Images, Temples, and Habitations of the Holy Trinity. This is God's good Will to all *Christians*, *Jews*, and *Heathens*. They are all *equally* the Desire of his Heart, his Light continually *waits* for an Entrance into *all* of them, his *Wisdom crieth*, *she putteth forth her Voice*, not here, or there, but every where, in all the Streets of all the Parts of the World.

Now there is but *one possible* Way for Man to attain this Salvatian, or Life of God in the Soul. There is not one for the *Jew*, another for a *Christian*, and a Third for the *Heathen*. No: God is one, human Nature is one, Salvation is one, and the *Way* to it is one; and

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that is, THE DESIRE OF THE SOUL TURNED TO GOD. When this *Desire* is alive and breaks forth in any Creature under Heaven, then the *lost Sheep* is found, and the *Shepherd* has it upon his Shoulders. Through *this Desire* the Poor *prodigal Son* leaves his *Husks* and *Swine*, and hastes to his Father; it is because of *this Desire*, that the Father sees the Son while yet *afar off*, that he runs out to meet him, falls on his Neck, and kisses him. See here how plainly we are taught, that no sooner is this Desire *arisen*, and in *Motion* towards GOD, but the *Operation* of GOD's Spirit answers to it, cherishes and welcomes its *first Beginnings*, signified by the Father's seeing, and having Compassion on his Son, whilst yet *afar off*, that is, in the first Beginnings of his Desire. Thus does *this Desire* do all, it brings the Soul to GOD, and GOD into the Soul, it unites with GOD, it co-operates with GOD, and is one Life with GOD. Suppose this *Desire* not to be alive, not in Motion either in a *Jew*, or a *Christian*, and then all the Sacrifices, the Service, the Worship either of the *Law*, or the *Gospel*, are but *dead* Works, that bring *no Life* into the Soul, nor beget any *Union* between GOD and it. Suppose this Desire to be awakened, and fixed upon GOD, though in Souls that never heard either of the Law

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or Goſpel, and then the divine Life, or Operation of GOD, enters into them, and the new Birth in CHRIST is formed in thoſe that never heard of his Name. And theſe are they *that ſhall come from the Eaſt, and from the Weſt, and ſit down with Abraham, and Iſaac, in the Kingdom of God.*

Oh my GOD, juſt and good, how great is thy Love and Mercy to Mankind, that Heaven is thus every where open, and CHRIST thus the *common* Saviour to all that turn the Deſire of their Hearts to Thee! Oh ſweet Power of the *Bruiſer* of the Serpent, born in every Son of Man, that ſtirs and works in every Man, and gives every Man a Power, and Deſire, to find his Happineſs in GOD! O holy JESUS, heavenly *Light, that lighteſt every Man that cometh into the World,* that redeemeſt every Soul that follows thy Light, which is *always within Him!* O holy Trinity, immenſe Ocean of divine Love, in which all Mankind live, and move, and have their Being! None are ſeparated from Thee, none live out of thy Love, but all are embraced in the Arms of thy Mercy, all are Partakers of thy Divine Life, the Operation of thy holy Spirit, as ſoon as their Heart is turned to Thee! Oh plain, and eaſy, and ſimple Way of Salvation, wanting no Subtilties of

Art or Science, no borrowed Learning, no Refinements of Reaſon, but all done by the ſimple natural Motion of every Heart, that truly longs after GOD. For no ſooner is the finite Deſire of the Creature in motion towards GOD, but the infinite Deſire of GOD is united with it, co-operates with it. And in this united Deſire of GOD and the Creature, is the Salvation and Life of the Soul brought forth. For the Soul is ſhut out of GOD, and impriſoned in its own dark Workings of Fleſh and Blood, merely and ſolely, becauſe it deſires to live to the Vanity of this World. This *Deſire* is its Darkneſs, its Death, its Impriſonment, and Separation from GOD.

When therefore the *firſt Spark* of a Deſire after GOD ariſes in thy Soul, cheriſh it with all thy Care, give all thy Heart into it, it is nothing leſs than a Touch of the divine *Loadſtone*, that is to draw Thee out of the Vanity of Time into the Riches of Eternity. Get up therefore and follow it as gladly, as the *Wiſe-men of the Eaſt* followed the *Star* from Heaven that appeared to them. It will do for Thee, as the Star did for them, it will lead Thee to the Birth of JESUS, not in a Stable at *Bethlehem* in *Judea*, but to the

the Birth of JESUS in the *dark Center* of thy own fallen Soul.

I ſhall conclude this *firſt Part*, with the Words of the heavenly Illuminated and bleſſed *Jacob Behmen*.

'It is much to be lamented, that we 'are ſo blindly led, and the Truth with-'held from us through imaginary Concep-'tions; for if the *divine Power* in the in-'ward Ground of the Soul was manifeſt, 'and working with its Luſtre in us, then is 'the whole Tri-une GOD preſent in the '*Life* and *Will* of the Soul; and the Hea-'ven, wherein GOD dwells, is opened in 'the Soul, and *There*, in the Soul, is the '*Place* where the Father begets his Son, 'and where the Holy Ghoſt proceeds from 'the Father and the Son.

'CHRIST ſays, *I am the Light of the 'World, he that followeth me, walketh not in 'Darkneſs.* He directs us only to himſelf, 'He is the Morning Star, and is generated 'and riſes in us, and ſhines in the Darkneſs 'of our Nature. O how great a Triumph 'is there in the Soul, when he ariſes in it! 'then a Man knows, as he never knew be-'fore, that he is a Stranger in a foreign 'Land.'

A PRAYER.

OH heavenly Father, infinite fathomleſs Depth of never ceaſing Love, ſave me from myſelf, from the diſorderly Workings of my fallen long corrupted Nature, and let my Eyes ſee, my Heart and Spirit feel and find, thy Salvation in CHRIST JESUS.

O GOD, who madeſt me for thyſelf, to ſhew forth thy Goodneſs in me, manifeſt, I humbly beſeech Thee, the Life-giving Power of thy holy Nature within me, help me to ſuch a true and living Faith in Thee, ſuch Strength of Hunger and Thirſt after the Birth, Life, and Spirit of thy Holy JESUS in my Soul, that all that is within me may be turned from every inward Thought, or outward Work, that is not Thee, thy Holy JESUS, and heavenly working in my Soul. *Amen.*

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THE

SECOND PART

OF THE

SPIRIT OF PRAYER:

OR,

The SOUL Rising out of the VANITY of TIME,

INTO THE

RICHES of ETERNITY.

Being several DIALOGUES between ACADEMICUS, RUSTICUS, and THEOPHILUS; at which HUMANUS was present.

By *WILLIAM LAW*, M. A.

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THE

FIRST DIALOGUE

BETWEEN

ACADEMICUS, RUSTICUS, and THEOPHILUS.

At which HUMANUS was preſent.

ACAD. WELL met, honeſt RUSTICUS. I can now tell you with much Pleaſure, that we ſhall ſoon ſee a *Second Part* of the SPIRIT of PRAYER; and as ſoon as I get it, I will come and read it to you.

RUST. I have often told you, ACADEMICUS, that I wondered at your Eagerneſs and Impatience to ſee more of this Matter. As to my Part, I have no ſuch Thirſt within me; and ſhould make no Complaint, if it never came out.

ACAD. My Friend RUSTICUS, you cannot read; and that is the Reaſon, that you are not in my State of Impatience, to ſee another Book.

RUST. Indeed ACADEMICUS, you quite miſtake the Matter. The Firſt Part of the *Spirit of Prayer* you read to me more than

three or four times, and that is the Reaſon, why I am in no State of Eagerneſs after a Second Part. I have found, in the Firſt Part, all that I need to know of God, of Chriſt, of myſelf, of Heaven, of Hell, of Sin, of Grace, of Death, and of Salvation: that all theſe Things have their *Being*, their *Life*, and their *Working*, in my own Heart: that God is always in me, that Chriſt is always within me; that he is the inward *Light* and *Life* of my Soul, a *Bread* from Heaven, of which I may always eat; a *Water* of eternal *Life* ſpringing up in my Soul, of which I may always drink. O my Friend, theſe Truths have opened a new Life in my Soul: I am brought home to myſelf; the Veil is taken off from my Heart; I have found my God; I know that his Dwelling-place, his Kingdom, is within me. What need we then call out for Books written only with Pen and Ink, when ſuch a Book as this, ſo full of Wonders, is once opened in our own Hearts? My Eyes, my Ears, my Thoughts, are all turned inwards: becauſe all that God, and Chriſt, and Grace, are doing for me; all that the Devil, the World, and the Fleſh, are working againſt me; are only to be known, and found there. What need then of ſo much News from abroad, ſince all that concerns either

Life

Life or *Death*, are all tranſacting, and all at work, within me?

How could I be ſaid to have felt theſe great Truths, to be ſenſible of theſe Riches of Eternity treaſured up in my Soul, to know what a great Good the Divine Nature is in me, and to me; if, inſtead of turning all the Deſire and Delight of my Heart towards them, I only felt a Longing and Deſire to read more concerning the Spirit of Prayer? No, ACADEMICUS, another, and a better Fire is kindled within me; my Heart is in motion, and all that is within me tends towards God; and I find that nothing concerns me more, than to keep my Heart from wandering after any thing elſe. I now know to what it is that I am daily to die, and to what it is that I am daily to live; and therefore look upon every Day as loſt, that does not help forwards both this Death, and this Life, in me. I have not yet done half, what the Firſt Part of the Spirit of Prayer directs me to do; and therefore have but little Occaſion to call out for a Second.

THEOPH. Indeed, ACADEMICUS, I muſt own, that honeſt RUSTICUS, as you called him, has ſpoken well. Your Education has ſo accuſtomed you to the Pleaſure of reading Variety of Books, that you hardly

propoſe any other End in reading, than the Entertainment of your Mind: thus the Spirit of Prayer has only awakened in you a deſire to ſee another Part upon the ſame Subject. This Fault is very common to others, as well as Scholars, and even to thoſe who delight in reading only good Books.

PHILO for theſe twenty Years has been collecting and reading all the *ſpiritual* Books he can hear of. He reads them, as the *Critics* read Commentators and Lexicons; to be nice and exact in telling you the *Style*, *Spirit*, and *Intent*, of this or that ſpiritual Writer, how one is more accurate in this, and the other in that. PHILO will ride you forty Miles in Winter to have a Converſation about ſpiritual Books, or to ſee a Collection larger than his own. PHILO is amazed at the Deadneſs and Inſenſibility of the Chriſtian World, that they are ſuch Strangers to the inward Life and ſpiritual Nature of the Chriſtian Salvation; he wonders how they can be ſo zealous for the outward Letter and Form of Ordinances, and ſo averſe to that ſpiritual Life, that they all point at, as the one thing needful. But PHILO never thinks how wonderful it is, that a Man who knows Regeneration to be the Whole, ſhould yet content himſelf with the Love of Books upon the new Birth, inſtead of being born again

again himſelf. For all that is changed in PHILO, is his Taſte for Books. He is no more dead to the World, no more delivered from himſelf, is as fearful of Adverſity, as fond of Proſperity, as eaſily provoked and pleaſed with Trifles, as much governed by his *own* Will, Tempers, and Paſſions, as unwilling to deny his Appetites, or enter into War with himſelf, as he was *twenty Years* ago. Yet all is well with PHILO; he has no Suſpicion of himſelf; he dates the Newneſs of his Life, and the Fulneſs of his Light, from the Time that he diſcovered the Pearl of Eternity in ſpiritual Authors.

All this, ACADEMICUS, is ſaid on your Account, that you may not loſe the Benefit of this Spark of the Divine Life that is kindled in your Soul, but may conform yourſelf ſuitably to ſo great a Gift of God.

It demands at preſent an Eagerneſs of another Kind, than that of much reading, even upon the moſt ſpiritual Matters.

ACAD. I thank you, THEOPHILUS, for your good Will towards me; but did not imagine my Eagerneſs after ſuch Books to be ſo great and dangerous a Miſtake. And if I do not yet entirely give into what you ſay, it is becauſe a Friend of yours has told us (and as I thought by way of Direction) that he has been a diligent Reader of all the ſpi-

ritual Authors from the apoſtolical *Dyoniſius* down to the illuminated *Guion*, and celebrated *Fenelon* of *Cambray:* and therefore it would never have come into my Head, to ſuſpect it to be a Fault, or dangerous, to follow his Example.

THEOPH. I have ſaid nothing, my Friend, with a Deſign of hindering your Acquaintance with all the truly ſpiritual Writers. I would rather, in a right Way, help you to a true Intimacy with them: for they are Friends of God, entruſted with his Secrets, and Partakers of the Divine Nature; and he that converſes rightly with them, has an Happineſs, that can hardly be over-valued.

My Intention is only to abate, for a Time, a Spirit of Eagerneſs after much reading, which in your State has more of Nature than Grace in it; which ſeeks Delight in a Variety of new Notions, and rather gratifies Curioſity, than reforms the Heart.

Suppoſe you had ſeen an Angel from Heaven, who had diſcovered to you a Glimpſe of its own internal Brightneſs, and of that glorious Union in which it lived with God, opening more of itſelf to the inward Sight of your Mind, than you could either forget or relate. Suppoſe it had told you with a piercing Word, and living Impreſſion, that all

all its own angelic and heavenly Brightneſs was hid in yourſelf, concealed from you under a beſtial Covering of Fleſh and Blood; that this Fleſh and Blood was become the Maſter of it, would not ſuffer it to breathe, or ſtir, or come to Life in you. Suppoſe it had told you, that all your Life had been ſpent in helping this Fleſh and Blood to more and more Power over you, to hinder you from knowing and feeling this Divine Life within you. Suppoſe it had told you, that to this Day you had lived in the groſſeſt *Self-idolatry*, loving, ſerving, honouring, and adoring yourſelf, inſtead of loving, ſerving, and adoring God with all your Heart, and Soul, and Spirit: that all your Intentions, Projects, Cares, Pleaſures, and Indulgences, had been only ſo much Labour to bring you to the Grave in a total Ignorance of that great Work, for which alone you was born into the World.

Suppoſe it had told you, that all this Blindneſs and Inſenſibility of your State, was obſtinately and wilfully brought upon yourſelf, becauſe you had boldly ſlighted and reſiſted all the daily inward and outward Calls of God to your Soul, all the Teachings, Doings, and Sufferings, of a Son of God to redeem you. Suppoſe it left you with this *Farewel*, "O Man, awake! thy Work is "great,

" great, thy Time is ſhort, I am thy laſt " Trumpet; the *Grave* calls for thy Fleſh " and Blood, thy Soul muſt enter into a " new Lodging. To be born again, is to " be an Angel; not to be born again, is to " become a Devil".

Tell me now, ACADEMICUS, what would you expect from a Man who had been thus awakened, and pierced by the Voice of an Angel? Could you think he had any Senſe left, if he was not caſt into the deepeſt Depth of Humility, Self-dejection, and Self-abhorrence? Caſting himſelf, with a broken Heart, at the Feet of the divine Mercy, deſiring nothing but that, from that Time, every Moment of his Life might be given unto God, in the moſt perfect Denial of every Temper, Will, and Inclination, that nouriſhed the Corruption of his Nature: wiſhing and praying from the Bottom of his Heart, that God would lead him into and through every thing inwardly and outwardly, that might deſtroy the evil Workings of his Nature, and awaken all that was holy and heavenly within him; that the Seed of Eternity, the Spark of Life, that he had ſo long quenched and ſmothered under earthly Rubbiſh, might breathe, and come to Life, in him.

Or would you think he was enough affected with this angelic Viſit, if all that it had awakened

awakened in him, was only a Longing and eager Desire to hear the same, or another Angel talk again?

Acad. O Theophilus, you have said enough: for all that is within me consents to the Truth and Justness of what you have said. I now feel in the strongest Manner, that I have been rather amused, than edified, by what I have read.

Theoph. A spiritual Book, Academicus, is a Call to as real and total a Death to the Life of corrupt Nature, as that which *Adam* died in Paradise, was to the Life of Heaven. He, indeed, died at once totally to the divine Life in which he was created: but as our Body of Earth is to last to the End of our Lives; so to the End of our earthly Life, every Step we take, every Inch of our Road, is to be made up of Denial, and dying to ourselves; because all our Redemption consists in our regaining that first Life of Heaven in the Soul, to which *Adam* died in Paradise. And therefore the one single Work of Redemption, is the one single Work of Regeneration, or the raising up of a Life, and Spirit, and Tempers, and Inclinations, contrary to that Life and Spirit which we derive from our earthly fallen Parents. To think therefore of any Thing, but the continual, total Denial of our earthly Nature,

Nature, is to overlook the very one Thing on which all depends. And to hope for any Thing, to truſt or pray for any Thing, but the *Life of God*, or a *Birth* of Heaven, in our Souls, is as uſeleſs to us, as placing our Hope and Truſt in a graven Image. Thus ſaith the Chriſt of God, the one Pattern, and Author of our Salvation: *If any Man will be my Diſciple, let him deny himſelf, hate is own Life, take up his daily Croſs, and follow me.* And again: *Unleſs a Man be born again from above, of Water and the Spirit, he cannot ſee, or enter into, the Kingdom of God.*

Now is your Time, ACADEMICUS, to enter deeply into this great Truth. You are juſt come out of the Slumber of Life, and begin to ſee with new Eyes the Nature of your Salvation. You are charmed with the Diſcovery of a Kingdom of Heaven hidden within you, and long to be entertained more and more with the Nature, Progreſs, and Perfection of the new Birth, or the Opening of the Kingdom of God in your Soul.

But, my Friend, ſtop a little. It is indeed great Joy, that the *Pearl of great Price* is found; but take Notice, that it is not yours, you can have no Poſſeſſion of it, till, as the Merchant did, *you ſell all that you have*, and buy it. Now *Self* is all that you have, it is your ſole Poſſeſſion; you have no Goods

of

of your *own*, nothing is yours but *this Self*. The Riches of *Self* are your *own Riches*; but *all this Self* is to be parted with, before the Pearl is yours. Think of a lower Price, or be unwilling to give thus much for it; plead in your Excuſe, that you keep the Commandments; and then you are that very rich young Man in the Goſpel, who went away ſorrowful from our Lord, when he had ſaid, *If thou wilt be perfect*, that is, if thou wilt obtain the Pearl, *ſell all that thou haſt, and give to the Poor*; that is, die to all thy *Poſſeſſion of Self*, and then thou haſt given all that thou haſt to the Poor, all that thou haſt is devoted and uſed for the Love of God and thy Neighbour. This ſelling all, ACADEMICUS, is the Meaſure of your dying to *Self*; all of it is to be given up; it is an *apoſtate* Nature, a *ſtolen* Life, brought forth in Rebellion againſt God; it is a continual Departure from him; it corrupts every Thing it touches; it defiles every Thing it receives; it turns all the Gifts and Bleſſings of God into Covetouſneſs, Partiality, Pride, Hatred, and Envy. All theſe Tempers are born, and bred, and nouriſhed, in *Self*; they have no other Place to live in, no Poſſibility of Exiſtence, but in that Creature which is fallen from a Life in God, into a Life in *Self*.

ACAD.

ACAD. Pray, Sir, tell me more plainly, what this *Self* is, ſince ſo much depends upon it.

THEOPH. It is Hell, it is the Devil, it is Darkneſs, Pain, and Diſquiet. It is the one only Enemy of Chriſt, the great Antichriſt. It is the ſcarlet Whore, the fiery Dragon, the old Serpent, the devouring Beaſt, that is mentioned in the Revelation of St. *John*.

ACAD. You rather terrify than inſtruct me, by this Deſcription.

THEOPH. It is, indeed, a very frightful Matter; it contains every thing that Man has to dread and hate, to reſiſt and avoid. Yet be aſſured, my Friend, that, careleſs and merry as the World is, every Man that is born into it, has all theſe Enemies to overcome *within* himſelf. And every Man, till he is in the Way of Regeneration, is more or leſs governed by them. No Hell in any remote Place, no Devil that is ſeparate from you, no Darkneſs or Pain that is not within you, no Antichriſt either at *Rome* or *England*, no furious Beaſt, no fiery Dragon, without, or apart from you, can do you any Hurt. It is your own Hell, your own Devil, your own Beaſt, your own Antichriſt, your own Dragon, that lives in your own Heart's Blood, that alone can hurt you.

Die

Die to this Self, to this inward Nature; and then all outward Enemies are overcome. Live to this Self, and then, when this Life is out, all that is within you, and all that is without you, will be nothing elſe but a mere ſeeing and feeling this Hell, Serpent, Beaſt, and fiery Dragon.

See here, ACADEMICUS, the twofold Nature of every Man. He has *within* him a redeeming Power, the *Meekneſs* of the heavenly Life, called the *Lamb of God*. This Seed is ſurrounded, or encompaſſed, with the *Beaſt* of fleſhly Luſts, the *Serpent* of Guile and Subtilty, and the *Dragon* of fiery Wrath. This is the great Trial, or Strife of human Life, whether a Man will live to the Luſts of the *Beaſt*, the Guile of the *Serpent*, the Pride and Wrath of the *fiery Dragon*; or give himſelf up to the Meekneſs, the Patience, the Sweetneſs, the Simplicity, the Humility of the *Lamb of God*.

This is the Whole of the Matter between God and the Creature. On one ſide, Fire and Wrath, awakened firſt by the rebellious Angels; and on the other ſide, the Meekneſs of the Lamb of God, the Patience of divine Love coming down from Heaven, to ſtop and overcome the Fire and Wrath that is broken out in Nature and Creature. Your

Father

Father *Adam* has introduced you into the Fire and Wrath of the fallen Angels, into a World from whence Paradiſe is departed. Your Fleſh and Blood is kindled in that Sin, which firſt brought forth a murdering *Cain*. But, dear Soul, be of good Comfort; for the *Meekneſs*, the *Love*, the *Heart*, the *Lamb* of God is become Man, has ſet himſelf in the Birth of thy own Life, that in him, and with him, and by a Birth from him, Heaven and Paradiſe may be again opened both within thee, and without thee, not for a Time, but to all Eternity.

Once more, ACADEMICUS. Every Man in this World ſtands *eſſentially* in Heaven, and in Hell, both as to that which is within him, and that which is without him: for Man and the World are both in the *ſame* fallen State. The *Curſe* in the Earth is that *ſame Thing* in outward Nature, that the *Loſs* of the divine Life was to the Soul of *Adam*. The whole World in all its Nature is nothing elſe but a *real Mixture* of Heaven and Hell. The Sun and the Water of this World, is that which keeps under and overcomes the Darkneſs, Wrath, and Fire of Hell, and carries on the vegetable and animal Life that is in it. The Light of the Sun bleſſes all the Workings of the Elements, and the cool, ſoftening Eſſence of the Water, keeps under

under the Fire and Wrath of Nature. In all *animal* Creatures, the Birth of *Light* in their own Life, and the *Water* of their own Blood, both produced by the Light of the Sun, and the Water of outward Nature, brings forth an Order of earthly Creatures, that can enjoy the Good that is in this World, in Spite of the Wrath of Hell, and the Malice of Devils.

But Man has more than all this: for being at firſt created an Angel, and intended by the Mercy of God to be an Angel again, he has the *Light* of Heaven, and the *Water* of eternal Life, both given to *Adam* in that *Seed of the Woman*, which was to *bruiſe* the Head of the Serpent; that is, to overcome the Curſe, the Fire, and Wrath, or Hell, that was awakened in the fallen Soul. So that Man has not only, in common with the other Animals, the Light and Water of outward Nature, to quench the Wrath of his own Life in this mixed World; but he has the Meekneſs, the Light, the Love, the Humility of the Holy Jeſus, as a Seed of Life born in his Soul, to bring forth that firſt Image of God, in which *Adam* was created.

This, my Friend, is the true Ground of all true Religion. It means nothing, it intends nothing, but to overcome that *earthly*

Life, which overcame *Adam* in the Fall, which made him a Priſoner of Hell, and a Slave to the corrupt Workings of earthly Fleſh and Blood. And therefore you may ſee, and know with a mathematical Certainty, that the one thing neceſſary for every fallen Soul, is to die to all the Life that we have from this World, that the Life of Heaven may be born again in him. The Life of this World is the Life of the *Beaſt*, the *Scarlet Whore*, the old *Serpent*, and the *fiery Dragon*.

Hence it is that Sin rides in Triumph over Church and State, and from the Court to the Cottage all is over-run with Senſuality, Guile, Falſeneſs, Pride, Wrath, Envy, Selfiſhneſs, and every Form of Corruption. Every one ſwims away in this Torrent, but he who hears and attends to the *Voice* of the Son of God *within* him, calling him to die to this Life, to take up his Croſs, and follow him. Much learned Pains has been often taken to prove *Rome*, or *Conſtantinople*, to be the Seat of the Beaſt, the Antichriſt, the Scarlet Whore, *&c.* But, alas! they are not at ſuch a Diſtance from us; they are the Properties of fallen human Nature; and are all of them alive in our own Selves, till we are dead or dying to all the Spirit and Tempers of this World. They are every-

where,

where, in every Soul, where the heavenly Nature and Spirit of the Holy Jeſus is not. But when the human Soul turns from itſelf, and turns to God; dies to itſelf, and lives to God, in the Spirit, Tempers, and Inclinations of the Holy Jeſus, loving, pitying, ſuffering, and praying for all its Enemies, and overcoming all Evil with Good, as this Chriſt of God did; then, but not till then, are theſe Monſters ſeparate from it. For Covetouſneſs and Senſuality of all kinds, are the very devouring *Beaſt*; Religion governed by a worldly, trading Spirit, and gratifying the partial Intereſts of Fleſh and Blood, is nothing elſe but the *Scarlet Whore*; Guile, and Craft, and Cunning, are the very Eſſence of the *old Serpent*; Self-Intereſt and Self-Exaltation are the whole Nature of *Antichriſt*; Pride, Perſecution, Wrath, Hatred, and Envy, are the very Eſſence of the *fiery Dragon*.

This, ACADEMICUS, is the fallen human Nature; and this is the *old Man*, which is alive in every one, though in various Manners, till he is born again from above. To think therefore of any thing in Religion, or to pretend to real Holineſs, without totally dying to this old Man, is building Caſtles in the Air; and can bring forth nothing, but *Satan* in the Form of an Angel

of Light. Would you know, ACADEMICUS, whence it is, that ſo many falſe Spirits have appeared in the World, who have deceived themſelves and others with falſe Fire, and falſe Light, laying Claim to Inſpirations, Illuminations, and Openings of the Divine Life, pretending to do Wonders under extraordinary Calls from God? It is this; they have turned to God, without turning from themſelves; would be alive in God, before they were dead to their own Nature; a Thing as impoſſible in itſelf, as for a Grain of Wheat to be alive before it dies.

Now Religion in the Hands of Self, or corrupt Nature, ſerves only to diſcover Vices of a worſe kind, than in Nature left to itſelf. Hence are all the diſorderly Paſſions of religious Men, which burn in a worſe Flame, than Paſſions only employed about worldly Matters: Pride, Self-Exaltation, Hatred, and Perſecution, under a Cloak of religious Zeal, will ſanctify Actions, which Nature, left to itſelf, would be aſhamed to own.

You may now ſee, ACADEMICUS, with what great Reaſon I have called you, at your firſt ſetting out, to this great Point, the *total dying to Self*, as the only Foundation of a ſolid Piety. All the fine Things you hear or read of an inward and ſpiritual Life in God, all your Expectations of the Light and

and Holy Spirit of God, will become a falſe Food to your Soul, till you only ſeek for them thro' Death to Self.

Obſerve, Sir, the Difference which Cloaths make in thoſe, who have it in their Power to dreſs as they pleaſe: ſome are all for Shew, Colours, and Glitter; others are quite fantaſtical and affected in their Dreſs: ſome have a grave and ſolemn Habit; others are quite ſimple and plain in the whole Manner. Now all this Difference of Dreſs is only an outward Difference, that covers the ſame poor Carcaſe, and leaves it full of all its own Infirmities. Now all the Truths of the Goſpel, when only embraced and poſſeſſed by the *old Man*, make only ſuch ſuperficial Difference, as is made by Cloaths. Some put on a ſolemn, formal, prudent, outſide Carriage; others appear in all the Glitter and Shew of religious Colouring, and ſpiritual Attainments; but under all this outſide Difference, there lies the poor fallen Soul, impriſoned, unhelped, in its own fallen State. And thus it muſt be, it is not poſſible to be otherwiſe, till the ſpiritual Life begins at the true Root, grows out of *Death*, and is born in a broken Heart, an Heart broken off from all its own natural Life. Then Self-Hatred, Self-Contempt, and Self-Denial, is as ſuitable to this new-born Spirit,

as Self-Love, Self-Eſteem, and Self-Seeking, is to the unregenerate Man. Let me, therefore, my Friend, conjure you, not to look forward, or caſt about for ſpiritual Advancement, till you have rightly taken this *firſt* Step in the ſpiritual Life. All your future Progreſs depends upon it: for this Depth of Religion goes no deeper, than the Depth of your Malady: for Sin has its Root in the Bottom of your Soul, it comes to Life with your Fleſh and Blood, and breathes in the Breath of your natural Life; and therefore, till you die to Nature, you live to Sin; and whilſt this Root of Sin is alive in you, all the Virtues you put on, are only like fine painted Fruit hung upon a bad Tree.

ACAD. Indeed, THEOPHILUS, you have made the Difference between true and falſe Religion as plain to me, as the Difference between Light and Darkneſs. But all that you have ſaid, at the ſame time, is as new to me, as if I had lived in a Land, where Religion had never been named. But pray, Sir, tell me how I am to take this *firſt Step*, which you ſo much inſiſt upon.

THEOPH. You are to turn wholly from yourſelf, and to give up yourſelf wholly unto God, in this or the like Form of Words or Thoughts:

" O my

" O my God! with all the Strength of " my Soul, assisted by thy Grace, I desire " and resolve to resist and deny all my own " Will, earthly Tempers, selfish Views, and " Inclinations; every thing that the Spirit " of this World, and the Vanity of fallen " Nature, prompts me to. I give myself " up wholly and solely unto Thee, to be " all thine, to have, and do, and be, in- " wardly and outwardly, according to thy " good Pleasure. I desire to live for no " other Ends, with no other Designs, but " to accomplish the Work which thou re- " quirest of me, an humble, obedient, " faithful, thankful Instrument in thy " Hands, to be used as thou pleasest."

You are not to content yourself, my Friend, with now and then, or even many times, making this Oblation of yourself to God. It must be the daily, the hourly Exercise of your Mind; till it is wrought into your very Nature, and becomes an essential State and Habit of your Mind; till you feel yourself as habitually turned from all your own Will, selfish Ends, and earthly Desires, as you are from Stealing and Murder; till the whole Turn and Bent of your Spirit points as constantly to God, as the Needle touched with the Loadstone does to the North. This, Sir, is your first and

neceſſary Step in the ſpiritual Life; this is the Key to all the Treaſures of Heaven; this unlocks the ſealed Book of your Soul, and makes room for the Light and Spirit of God to ariſe up in it. Without this, the ſpiritual Life is but ſpiritual Talk, and only aſſiſts Nature to be pleaſed with an Holineſs that it has not.

The Neceſſity of this firſt Step, and the Folly of pretending to ſucceed without it, is thus repreſented by our bleſſed Lord: *What Man intending to build an Houſe*, &c.

All our Ability and Preparation to ſucceed in this great Affair, lies in this *firſt Step*. You may perhaps think this an hard Saying. But do not go away ſorrowful, like the young Man in the Goſpel, becauſe he had great Poſſeſſions. For, my Friend, you little think what a Deliverance you will have from all Hardſhips, and what a Flow of Happineſs is found even in this Life, as ſoon as the Soul is *thus* dead to *Self*, freed from its own Paſſions, and wholly given up to God; of which I ſhall ſpeak to you by and by. I have told you the Price of the new Birth. I ſhall now leave you to conſider, whether you will be ſo wiſe a Merchant, as to give up all the Wealth of the old Man for this heavenly Pearl. I do not expect your Anſwer now, but will ſtay for it till To-morrow.

But

But, pray, Gentlemen, who is this HUMANUS? I do not remember to have ſeen him before. He ſeems not willing to ſpeak, yet is often biting his Lips at what is ſaid.

RUST. This HUMANUS, Sir, is my Neighbour; but ſo ignorant of the Nature of the Goſpel, that he is often trying to perſuade me into a Diſbelief of it. I ſay ignorant (though he is a learned Man) becauſe I am well aſſured, that no Man ever did, or can oppoſe the Goſpel, but through a total Ignorance of what it is in itſelf: for the Goſpel, when rightly underſtood, is irreſiſtible; it brings more good News to the human Nature, than Sight to the Blind, Limbs to the Lame, Health to the Sick, or Liberty to the condemned Slave. But this Neighbour of mine has never yet been in Sight of the Truth, as it is in the Goſpel; he knows nothing of the Grounds and Reaſon of it, but what he has picked up out of Books, that have been written againſt it, and for it. He often makes uſe of one Maxim of the Goſpel, to overthrow it; and wonders that ſo plain and honeſt a Man as I am, will not ſubmit to it. He ſays, if it be a Truth, as the Goſpel ſaith, *That the Tree muſt be known by its Fruit, and that a good Tree cannot bring forth corrupt Fruit*; we need only look at the Lives of Chriſtians, the Craft of Prieſts,

Prieſts, the Wars, Contentions, Hatreds, Sects, Parties, Hereſies, Diviſions, Outrages, and Perſecutions, which Chriſtianity has brought forth; we need only look at this, to have all our Senſes and Reaſon aſſure us, that the Goſpel muſt be a bad Tree.

But this is enough concerning the Man. He comes with me at his own earneſt Deſire, which has lately ſeized him; and upon his own ſtrict Promiſe, not to interrupt our Converſation; but to be a ſilent Hearer, till it is all over. And therefore, if you pleaſe, Sir, I beg our Converſation may for a while turn upon the chief Points aſſerted in the Spirit of Prayer, for two Reaſons: firſt, that ACADEMICUS may ſee what Reaſons I had for ſaying, that that Book had given me ſufficient Inſtruction; and alſo that HUMANUS, hearing theſe great Points, may hear the whole Ground and Nature, the Neceſſity and Bleſſedneſs of the Chriſtian Redemption, ſet forth in ſuch a Degree of Light, and Truth, and Amiableneſs, as he had no Notion of before.

THEOPH. Your Neighbour is welcome; and I pray God to give him an Heart attentive to thoſe Truths, which have made ſo good an Impreſſion upon you. The firſt Point that you deſire us to ſpeak to, is concerning the Original of this temporal World. How God was moved to create it, upon the Fall

Fall of a whole Hoſt, or Kingdom of Angels, who, by their Revolt from God, loſt the divine Light, and awakened in themſelves, and the Region in which they dwelt, the dark, wrathful Fire of Hell: for Hell is nothing elſe, but Nature departed, or excluded, from the Beams of divine Light. The *Materiality* of their Kingdom was *ſpiritual*; and the Light that glanced through it, that filled its Tranſparency with an Infinity of glorious Wonders, was the Son of God, the Brightneſs of the Father's Glory. The *Spirit* that animated the inward Life of thoſe glorious Angels, and that moved with its ſweet Breath, through all this *glaſſy Sea*, opening and changing new Scenes in the Mirror of divine Wiſdom, was the *Holy Spirit* of God, that eternally proceeds from the Father and the Son. Thus did theſe celeſtial Spirits live, move, and have their Being, in God. All was Heaven, and they all were ſo many created Gods, eternally ſinking down, and riſing up, into new Heights and Depths of the Riches of the Divine Nature. With this Degree of Glory and Happineſs was the whole Extent of the Place of this World filled, before the Angels fell: and to this Degree of Happineſs, and heavenly Glory, will the whole Place of this World be again raiſed, when the Love of God

God ſhall have finiſhed the great Work of the Redemption of Mankind. Heaven again, and Angels again, raiſed out of the Miſery of Time, to ſing eternal Praiſes to the Holy Trinity, and to the Lamb that has overcome Sin, and Death, and Hell, and turned all the Wrath, and Miſery, and Darkneſs of this World, into an Heaven never more to be changed. O RUSTICUS, what Sentiments do theſe Things raiſe in you?

RUST. Indeed, Sir, they almoſt make me to forget, that I am in the Body. You have ſet me upon a Mountain, from which, whether I look backwards, or forwards, or downwards, all is equally ſurpriſing: backwards, a Breach made in Heaven, the firſt Opening of Hell and Darkneſs, and a new Creation out of the Ruins of the fallen Angels; forwards, Time and all temporal Nature riſing again into its firſt Eternity; downwards, a Globe of Earth, the Seat of War between Heaven and Hell, where Men are born to partake of the dreadful Strife, and have only the little Span of Life, either to overcome with God, or be overcome by the Devil, to all Eternity. O Sir, what great things are theſe? I wiſh that all the World, as well as my Neighbour HUMANUS, were forced to be ſilent Hearers of them. But, pray, Sir, go on.

THEOPH. When God saw the *Darkness that was upon the Face of the Deep*, and the whole angelic Habitation become a Chaos of Confusion, *the Spirit of God moved upon the Face of the Waters*: that is, the Spirit of God began to operate again in this outward Darkness, that covered this once transparent *glassy Sea*; for from a glassy Sea it was become a Deep covered with Darkness, which was soon to take another Nature; to have its Fire and Wrath converted into Sun and Stars; its Dross and Darkness into a Globe of Earth; its Mobility and Moisture into Air and Water; when the Spirit of God began to move and operate in it. But before this Chaos had entered into this new Order, God said, *Let there be Light; and there was Light*. This Light, my Friend, was not the present Light of this World, which now governs the Night and the Day; for the Sun, the Moon, and Stars, were not created till the fourth Day. But the Light which God then spake forth, was a Degree of Heaven, that was commanded to glance into the darkened Deep, which penetrated through all the Depth of the Chaos, and intermixed itself with every Part; not turning the Whole into a Region of Light, but only by its quickening Virtue fitting, disposing, and preparing, every Part to take that Change,

Change, which every following Day of the Creation was to bring forth, in and out of this darkened Deep: for Darkneſs is Death, and Light is Life. This was the Nature and Work of that firſt Light, which God called forth on the firſt Day: it was God's baptizing the dead *Chaos* with the Spirit of Life, that it might be capable of a Reſurrection into a new Creation.

See here the Uniformity of the Divine Procedure, with regard both to fallen Nature and Creature. When the Creature (Man) was fallen, his Redemption was begun by God's ſpeaking a *Seed* of Light, called the Seed of the Woman, into the Birth of his Life: this alone could qualify him for the new Creation in Chriſt Jeſus. When *Nature* was fallen, its Reſtoration was begun in the ſame Manner; Light was commanded to enter into it, or rather to riſe up in it: this was its Power or Poſſibility of coming out of its fallen State.

Marvel not, RUSTICUS, that I call this firſt Light of the firſt Day, a Degree of Heaven: for Light is natural, eſſential, and inſeparable from Heaven; it belongs only to Heaven; and where-ever elſe it is, it is only there as a Gift from Heaven. And therefore ſo much as there is of Light in this World, ſo much there is of Heaven in it.

Darkneſs

Darkneſs is natural, eſſential, and inſeparable from Hell; and can be no-where elſe, but where Hell can in ſome Degree open and diſcover itſelf. And where-ever, and in what Degree, Darkneſs can ſhew itſelf; there, and in the ſame Degree, is the Nature of Hell known and felt. This World is made up of Light and Darkneſs, not only as it conſiſts of Day and Night, but becauſe every earthly thing is itſelf a *Mixture* of Light and Darkneſs. The Darkneſs is the Evil, and the Light is the Good, that is in every thing. If the Darkneſs was predominant in Vegetables, they would all be rank Poiſon; if in Animals, they would be all as ſo many wrathful venomous Serpents of Hell. If the Light did quite ſuppreſs the Darkneſs in Vegetables, they would be like the Fruits which were to have been Man's Food in Paradiſe.

RUST. Theſe Things, THEOPHILUS, ſtrike a moſt amazing Light into all the Myſteries both of Nature and Grace. But they do not more enlighten, than they edify the Mind. They are all reforming Truths; they have the Nature of Alteratives; they purge the Heart of all its Droſs; they force it to drop all its Pretenſions to earthly things, as the poor deceitful Baits of fallen Nature; and to long for nothing, but to have That

firſt

firſt Heaven and Life in God, for which Angels and Men were at firſt created. But I want to ſhew to my Friend HUMANUS, as it were in one View, that Chain of Truths, which follows from what you have ſaid: tho' I had rather you would do it.

THEOPH. Agreed: and I will ſet them in order thus:

1ſt, That the Place of this World is the very Place, or Region, which belonged to *Lucifer*, and his Angels.

2dly, That every thing that we ſee in this World, all its Elements, the Stars, the Firmament, *&c.* are nothing elſe but the inviſible Things of the fallen World, made viſible in a new and lower State of Exiſtence.

3dly, That before the Rebellion of the Angels, there was nothing but God, and Heaven, and heavenly Beings. Light, and and Love, and Joy, and Glory, with all the Wonders thereof, were the only things ſeen and felt by the Angels. Darkneſs and Fire, with every Quality thereof, were abſolutely unknown to the Angels; they had no more Suſpicion of them, than of the Poſſibility of Sickneſs, Pain, Heat, and Cold. All they aimed at, was at being higher in the Glories, and Powers, and Light, of that Heaven in which they lived. But their turning to their own Strength to effect this, was their whole turning

turning from God, and a falling into Nature without God, which was the firſt Diſcovery of *Darkneſs*, Wrath, and Fire, and Pain, and Torment.

4thly, Hence it appears, that *Darkneſs* is the *Ground* of the Subſtance, or Materiality of Nature; *Fire* is its Life; *Light* is its glorious Tranſmutation into the Kingdom of Heaven; and *Spirit* is the Opener of all its Wonders. All that can be conceived, is either God, or Nature, or Creature: God is the Holy Trinity *without*, or *before* Nature; but Nature is the Manifeſtation of the Holy Trinity in a triune Life of *Fire*, *Light*, and *Spirit*.

5thly, Here we ſee the plain and true Original of all Evil, without any Perplexity, or Imputation upon God: that Evil is nothing elſe but the Wrath, and Fire, and Darkneſs of Nature, broken off from God: that the Puniſhment, the Pain, or the Hell of Sin, is no deſignedly prepared, or arbitrary Penalty inflicted by God; but the natural and neceſſary State of the Creature, that leaves, or turns from God.

6thly, That the Will of the Creature is the only Opener of all Evil or Good in the Creature; the Will ſtands between God and Nature, and muſt in all its Workings unite either with God, or Nature: the Will

totally reſigned, and given up to God, is one Spirit with God, and God dwelleth in it; the Will turned from God, is taken Priſoner in the Wrath, Fire, and Darkneſs of Nature.

7thly, Here we ſee, *how* and *why* a Creature can loſe, and die to all its Happineſs and Perfection, and, from a beauteous Angel, become a deformed Devil. It is becauſe Nature has no Beauty, Happineſs, or Perfection, but ſolely from the *Manifeſtation* or *Birth* of the Holy Trinity in it. God manifeſted in Nature, is the only Bleſſing, Happineſs, and Perfection of Nature. Therefore the Creature, that in the Working of its Will is turned from God, muſt have as great a Change brought forth in it, as that of Heaven into Hell; forced to live, but to have no other Life, but that of its own gnawing Worm, left to itſelf.

8thly, Hence we ſee the deep Ground, and abſolute Neceſſity, of the Chriſtian Redemption, by a Birth from above of the Light and Spirit of God, demonſtrated in the moſt abſolute Degree of Certainty. It is becauſe all Nature is, in itſelf, nothing but an *hungry*, *wrathful Fire* of Life, a tormenting Darkneſs, unleſs the Light and Spirit of God kindle it into a Kingdom of Heaven. And therefore the fallen Soul can have no

poſſible

poſſible Relief, or Redemption; it muſt be, to all Eternity, an *hungry*, *dark*, *fiery*, *tormenting* Spirit of Life, unleſs the Light, or Son, and Spirit of God, be born again in it. Hence alſo it follows, that, in all the Poſſibility of Things, there is and can be but one Happineſs, and one Miſery. The one Miſery, is Nature, and Creature left to itſelf; the one Happineſs, is the Life, the Light, and Spirit of God, manifeſted in Nature and Creature. This is the true Meaning of thoſe Words of our Lord, *There is but one that is good, and that is God.*

9thly, Hence it is alſo ſeen, that there is and can be but *one true* Religion for the fallen Soul, and that is, the Dying to *Self*, to *Nature*, and *Creature*; and a turning with all the *Will*, the *Deſire*, and *Delight* of the Soul to God. Sacrifices, Oblations, Prayers, Praiſes, Rites, and Ceremonies, without this, are but as ſounding Braſs, and tinkling Cymbals. Nay, Zeal, and Conſtancy, and Warmth, and Fervour, in the Performance of theſe religious Practices, is not the Matter; for Nature and Self-love can do all this. But theſe religious Practices are then only Parts of true Religion, when they mean nothing, ſeek nothing, but to keep up a continual Dying to Self, and all worldly Things, and turn all the Will,

Desire, and Delight of the Soul to God alone.

Lastly, there is and can be only *one* Salvation for the fallen Soul, and that is Heaven opened again in the Soul, by the Birth of such a Life, Light, and Spirit, as is born in Angels. For *Adam* was created to possess that Heaven from which the Angels fell; but nothing can enter into Heaven, but the angelic Life, which is born of Heaven. The Loss of this angelic Life was the Fall of *Adam*, or that Death which he died, on the Day he did eat of the earthly Fruit; therefore the Regeneration, or new Birth of his first angelic Life, is the one only Salvation of the fallen Soul. Ask not therefore, whether we are saved by Faith, or by Works; for we are saved by neither of them. Faith and Works are at first only *preparatory* to the new Birth; afterwards they are the true *genuine Fruits* and Effects of it. But the new Birth, a Life from Heaven, the new Creature, called *Christ in us*, is the one only Salvation of the fallen Soul. Nothing can enter into Heaven, but this Life which is born of, and comes from Heaven.

Rust. I thank you, Theophilus, for setting these awakening Truths in so strong a Light. And I think it is not possible for my Friend Humanus to be unaffected with them.

them. They must needs open in him a new Way of thinking about Religion, and shew him the deep and solid Ground of the absolute Necessity of the Christian Redemption, and incline him to be a willing Hearer of that which follows.

THEOPH. I hope it will be so, RUSTICUS; and what I would here, and through every Point we speak of, observe to your Friend HUMANUS, is this: that the Christian Religion is the *one only* true *Religion of Nature*, deeply and necessarily founded in the *Nature* of Things; that its Doctrines are not founded in an *arbitrary Appointment* of God, but have their *natural* and *necessary* Reason, why they cannot be otherwise, as has here been shewn in the one great Point of Regeneration, which is the Whole of Man's Salvation, and the one only Thing intended by all Revelation from the Fall of Man to the End of the World. Now the true Ground of the one true Religion of Nature cannot be known, or seen into, but by going back to the Beginning of Things, and shewing how they came into their present State. We must find out, *why* and *how* Religion came to be necessary, and on *what* its Necessity is founded. Now this cannot be done, unless we find out, what *Sin*, and *Evil*, and *Death*, and *Darkness*, are in themselves;

ſelves; and how they came into Nature and Creature. For this alone can ſhew us, what Religion is *true*, is *natural*, is *neceſſary*, and alone ſufficient to remove all Evil, Sin, and Diſorder, out of the Creation. For this Reaſon, we began with the Grounds and Reaſons of the Creation of this World, ſhewing how it came to be as it is. But this could not be done, but by going ſo far back as the Fall of Angels. For it was their Revolting from God, that brought *Wrath*, and *Fire*, and *Thickneſs*, and *Darkneſs*, and *Death*, into Nature and Creature; and ſo gave occaſion to this new Creation, and to its being in ſuch a State, and of ſuch a Nature, as it is.

For who does not ſee, that this firſt Deadneſs, Thickneſs, Wrath, Fire, and Darkneſs, cauſed by the Angels' Sin, are the very *Materials* out of which this World is made? For are not the Fire, the Air, the Water, the Earth, the Rocks and Stones of this World; the Rage of Heat and Cold, the Succeſſion of Day and Night, the Wrath of Storms and Tempeſts, an undeniable and daily Proof of all this? Now when we thus ſee what Sin, and Evil, and Death, and Darkneſs, are in Nature, and how they came into it; then we ſee alſo, how and what they are, and how they came into the Creature; becauſe the

Creature

Creature has its Form, its Being, in and out of Nature. They came into Nature, or roſe up in it, by Nature's being broken off from God, and ſo loſing the Light and Spirit of God, which made it to be a Kingdom of Heaven; we ſee alſo, when this diſordered Nature was to be taken out of its fallen State by a new Creation, that, to do this, the *Spirit of God moved*, or entered again into the Darkneſs of the Waters, and the *Light* of God was called into it. A plain Proof, that the Malady of Nature was nothing elſe but *its Loſs of the Light* and *Spirit* of God working in it. This ſhews us alſo, that the fallen Creature is to be reſtored, or put into a Way of Recovery, in *one and the ſame* Way as fallen Nature; *viz.* by the *Spirit*, and *Light* of God *entering* into it again, and bringing forth a new Birth, or Creation in Chriſt Jeſus. Juſt as the Spirit and Light entering into the *Chaos*, created or turned the Angels' ruined Kingdom into a Paradiſe on Earth.

Your Friend HUMANUS lays claim to a Religion of Nature and Reaſon: I join with him, with all my Heart. No other Religion can be right, but that which has its Foundation in Nature. For the God of Nature can require nothing of his Creatures, but what the *State* of their Nature calls them

to. Nature is his great Law, that ſpeaks his whole Will both in Heaven and on Earth; and to obey Nature, is to obey the God of Nature; to pleaſe him, and to live to him, in the higheſt Perfection. God indeed has many *After-laws*; but it is after his Creatures have fallen from Nature, and loſt its Perfection. But all theſe After-laws have no other End or Intention, but to repair Nature, and bring Men back to their firſt natural State of Perfection. What ſay you now, ACADEMICUS, to all theſe Matters?

ACAD. You, Sir, and RUSTICUS, both of you know, how theſe Matters have affected me, ever ſince I read the Book called *The Appeal to all that Doubt*, &c. From that Time, I have ſtood upon new Ground; I have ſeen Things in ſuch a Newneſs of Light, and Reality, as makes me take my former Knowledge for a Dream. A Dream I may juſtly ſay, ſince all my Labour was taken up in ſearching into a Seventeen Hundred Years Hiſtory of Doctrines, Diſputes, Decrees, Hereſies, Schiſms, and Sects, where-ever to be found, in *Europe*, *Aſia*, and *Africa*. From this goodly Heap of Stuff crouded into my Mind, I have been ſettling Matters betwixt all the preſent Chriſtian Diviſions both at Home and Abroad, according to the beſt Rules of Criticiſm;

Criticiſm; having little or no other Idea of a religious Man, than that of a ſtiff Maintainer of certain Points againſt all thoſe that oppoſe them. And in this reſpect, I believe I may ſay, that I only ſwam away in the common Torrent.

And in this laborious Dream I had in all Likelihood ended my Days; had not that Book, and ſome others of the like kind, ſhewn me, that Religion lay nearer Home, was not to be dug out of Diſputes, but lay hid in myſelf, like a Seed, which, for want of its proper Nouriſhment, could not come to the Birth. But however, though Matters ſtand thus with myſelf, and I ſeem to be entered into a Region of Light; yet I muſt not forget to tell you, what ſome of my learned Friends object to all this. They ſay, that in thoſe Books, there are many Things aſſerted, which have not the *plain Letter* of Scripture to ſupport them; and therefore Men of ſober Learning, are cautious of giving into Opinions, not ſtrictly grounded on the plain Letter of Scripture, however fine and plauſible they may ſeem to be.

THEOPH. Is there not ſome Reaſon, ACADEMICUS, to take this Objection of your learned Friends to be a mere Pretence? For what is more fully grounded upon the plain Letter of Scripture, than the Doctrine of a

real

real Regeneration, a new Birth of the *Word*, the *Son*, and *Holy Spirit* of God, really brought forth into the Soul? And yet this *plain Letter* of Scripture, upon the moſt important of all Points, the very *Life*, and *Eſſence*, and whole Nature of our Redemption, is not only *overlooked*, but openly *oppoſed*, by the Generality of Men of ſober Learning. But this Point has not only the plain Letter of Scripture for it; but what the Letter aſſerts, is abſolutely required by the whole Spirit and Tenor of the New Teſtament. All the Epiſtles of the Apoſtles proceed upon the ſuppoſed Certainty of this one great Point.

A Son of God, united with, and born in, our Nature, that his Nature may have a Birth in us; an Holy Spirit, breathing in the Birth and Life of our Souls, quickening the dead Life of fallen *Adam*, is the Letter and Spirit of the Apoſtles' Writings, grounded upon the plain Letter of our Lord's own Words, that unleſs we are born again from above, of the Son, Word, Water, and Spirit of God, we cannot enter or ſee the Kingdom of Heaven.

Again: is it not the plain Letter of Scripture, that *Adam* died the Day that he did eat of the earthly Tree? Have we not the moſt ſolemn Aſſeveration of God for the Truth

of

of this? Was not the Change which *Adam* found in himſelf, a Demonſtration of the Truth of this Fact? Inſtead of the Image and Likeneſs of God in which he was created, the Beauty of Paradiſe, he was ſtript of all his Glory, confounded at the ſhameful Deformity of his own Body, afraid of being ſeen, and unable to ſee himſelf uncovered; delivered up a Slave to the Rage of all the Stars and Elements of this World, not knowing which Way to look, or what to do in a World, where he was dead to all that he formerly felt, and alive only to a new and dreadful Feeling of Heat and Cold, Shame and Fear, and horrible Remorſe of Mind, at his ſad Entrance into a World, whence Paradiſe, and God, and his own Glory, were departed. Death enough ſurely! Death in its higheſt Reality! Much greater in its Change, than when an Animal of earthly Fleſh and Blood is only changed into a cold lifeleſs Carcaſe. A Death, that in all Nature has none like it, none equal to it, none of the ſame Nature with it, but that which the Angels died, when, from Angels of God, they became living Devils, ſerpentine, hideous Forms, and Slaves to Darkneſs! Say that the Angels loſt no Life, that they did not die a real Death, becauſe they are yet alive in the Horrors of Darkneſs;

neſs; and then you may ſay, with the ſame Truth, that *Adam* did not die, when he loſt God, and Paradiſe, and the firſt Glory of his Creation, becauſe he afterwards lived and breathed in a World which was outwardly, in all its Parts, full of the ſame Curſe that was within himſelf. But further; not only the plain Letter of the Text, and the Change of State, which *Adam* found in himſelf, demonſtrated a *real Death* to his former State; but the whole Tenor of Scripture abſolutely requires it; all the Syſtem of our Redemption proceeds upon it. For tell me, I pray, What Need of a Redemption, if *Adam* had not loſt his firſt State of Life? What Need of the Deity to enter again into the human Nature, not only as acting, but taking a Birth in it, and from it; what need of all this myſterious Method, to bring the Life *from above* again into Man, if the Life from above had not been *loſt?* Say that *Adam* did not die; and then tell me, what Senſe or Reaſon there is in ſaying, that the Son of God became Man, and died on the Croſs, to reſtore to him the Life that he had loſt? It is true indeed, that *Adam,* in his Death to the divine Life, was left in the Poſſeſſion of an earthly Life. And the Reaſon is plain why he was ſo: for his great Sin conſiſted in his Deſire and Longing to enter into the Life

Life of this World, to know its Good and Evil, as the Animals of this World do; it was his chooſing to have a Life of this World after this *new Manner*, and his entering upon the Means of attaining it, that was his Death to the Divine Life. And therefore it is no Wonder, that after his Death to Heaven and Paradiſe, he found himſelf *ſtill alive* as an earthly Animal. For the Deſire of this earthly Life was his *great Sin*; and the *Poſſeſſion* of this earthly Life, was the proper Puniſhment and Miſery that belonged to his Sin; and therefore it is no Wonder that *that Life*, which was the proper Puniſhment, and real Diſcovery of the Fruits of his Sin, ſhould ſubſiſt, after his Sin had put an End to the Life of Paradiſe and God in him. But wonderful is it to a great Degree, that any Man ſhould imagine, that *Adam* did not die on the Day of his Sin, becauſe he had as good a Life left in him, as the Beaſts of the Field have.

For is *the Life* that ſuch Animals live, or *the Death* that they die, the Life and Death with which our Redemption is concerned? Are not all the Scriptures full of Life and Death of a much higher Kind and Nature? And do not the Scriptures make Man the perpetual Subject to whom this *higher* Life and Death belong? What Ground or Reaſon there-

therefore can there be to think of the Death of an Animal of this World, when we read of the Death that *Adam* was assuredly to die the Day of his Sin? For does not all that befel him on the Day of his Sin, shew that he lost a much greater Life, suffered a more dreadful Change, than that of giving up the Breath of this World? For in the Day of his Sin, this Angel of Paradise, this Lord of the new Creation, fell from the Throne of his Glory (like *Lucifer* from Heaven) into the State of a poor, darkened, naked, distressed Animal of gross Flesh and Blood, unable to bear the odious Sight of that which his new-opened Eyes forced him to see; inwardly and outwardly feeling the Curse awakened in himself, and all the Creation; and reduced to have only the Faith of the Devils, to *believe* and *tremble*. Proof enough, surely, that *Adam* was dead to the Life, and Light, and Spirit of God; and that, with this Death, all that was *divine* and *heavenly* in his Soul, his Body, his Eyes, his Mind, and Thoughts, was quite at an End. Now *this* Life to which *Adam* then died, is *that* Life which all his Posterity are in want of, and cannot come out of the State of that Death into which he fell, but by having *this first* Life of Heaven born again in them. Now is there any Reason to say, that Mankind,

kind, in their natural State, are not dead to that firſt Life in which *Adam* was created, becauſe they are alive to this World? Yet this is as well as to ſay, that *Adam* did not die a real Death, becauſe he had afterwards an earthly Life in him. How comes our Lord to ſay, that *unleſs ye eat the Fleſh, and drink the Blood, of the Son of Man, ye have no Life in you?* Did he mean, ye have no earthly Life in you? How comes the Apoſtle to ſay, *He that hath the Son of God has Life, but he that hath not the Son of God hath not Life?* Does he mean the Life of this World? No. But both Chriſt and his Apoſtle aſſert this great Truth, that all Mankind are in the State of *Adam*'s *firſt Death*, till they are made alive again, by a Birth of the *Son*, and *Holy Spirit* of God brought forth in them. So plain is it, both from the expreſs Letter, and Spirit of Sripture, that *Adam* died a *real Death* to the Kingdom of God in the Day of his Sin. Take away this Death, and all the Scheme of our Redemption has no Ground left to ſtand upon.

Judge now, ACADEMICUS, who leaves the Letter of Scripture, your learned Friends, or the Author of the *Appeal*. They leave it, they oppoſe it, in that which is the *very Life* of Chriſtianity.

For

For without the *Reality* of a new Birth, founded on the Certainty of a *real Death* in the Fall of *Adam*, the Chriſtian Scheme is but a Skeleton of empty Words, a Detail of ſtrange Myſteries between God and Man, that do nothing, and have nothing to do.

On the other hand, look now at the things ſet forth in the *Appeal*, concerning the Fall of Angels, the Nature and Effects of their Revolt, and the Creation of this World as deduced therefrom. They neither *leave*, nor *oppoſe* any Letter, or Doctrine of Scripture. They add nothing to Religion, but the *full Proof* of all its Articles; they intend nothing, but to open the *original Ground*, and true Reaſon, of the Chriſtian Redemption, and the abſolute Neceſſity of its being ſuch, as the Goſpel declares. Now the *Letter* of Scripture does not do this in open Words; it ſets not forth the *why*, and *how*, things are, either in Nature or Grace; it teaches not the *Ground* or *Philoſophy* of the Chriſtian Faith; it contents itſelf with bare *Facts* and *Doctrines*, and calls for *ſimple* Faith and Obedience. No Wonder, therefore, when the *natural* and *neceſſary* Ground of the Chriſtian Redemption is *opened*, that the Letter of Scripture is not *Step* by *Step* appealed to, for every Thing that is ſaid. And yet many Things may be ſufficiently grounded

grounded on Scripture, that are not so expressed in the *Letter*. The *Sadducees* denied, that there was any Resurrection at all; and this they did, because they could not find it in the *express Letter* of the Five Books of *Moses*. And yet it seems, that the Resurrection was *plainly* and *strongly* taught there: for thus saith our Lord;—That the Dead shall rise again, *Moses* shewed at the Bush, when he said, *The Lord is the God of Abraham, Isaac*, &c. *For he is not the God of the Dead, but of the Living* *. This shews us that a Thing may be fully and sufficiently proved from Scripture, which is not plainly expressed in the Letter. And thus stands the Matter with regard to those great, and edifying Truths set forth in the *Appeal*. They are *truly scriptural*, they have their *Ground* and *Authority* from Scripture, though not so open and express in the Letter, as Matters of Faith and necessary Doctrine are. For is not the Fall of Angels a Scripture-Truth? Is not the Desolation, which their Fall brought into Nature, and the very Place of this World, a Scripture-Truth? What else can be meant by *Darkness upon the Face of the Deep?* What Darkness, or what Deep, but in the Place of this World? What Dark-

* Luke xx. 37, 38.

 ness,

neſs, or State of the Deep, but that, which God was about to raiſe out of its diſordered State? And does not the Letter of Scripture ſhew, that out of *this Darkneſs and Waters*, and State of the Deep, the Spirit and Light of God entering into them, brought forth the Earth, the Stars, the Sun, and all the Elements, into a Form of a new World?

To aſk for a particular Text of Scripture, ſaying in ſo many expreſs Words, that the Place of this World, is the very Place and Extent of the Kingdom of the fallen Angels, is quite ridiculous, and without the leaſt Ground in Reaſon, as is enough ſhewn in the *Appeal*. For does not our Lord expreſly call the *Devil, a Prince of this World?* But how could this Name belong to him, but becauſe he is here in his own *firſt Region*, and *Territories*; and has ſtill ſome Power, till all the Evil he has raiſed in it, ſhall be entirely ſeparated from it? For was not this World raiſed out of the *Materials* of the fallen Angels' Kingdom, and was not the Wrath, and Fire, and Darkneſs, *of their Fall*, ſtill in ſome Degree remaining in every Part of this World; they could have *no more* Power in it, than they have in Heaven; they muſt be as entirely incapable of ſeeing or entering into it, as they are of ſeeing or entering into the Kingdom of Heaven: for

for they have nothing but Evil in their Nature; they can touch nothing, move nothing, see nothing, feel nothing, taste nothing, act in nothing, but *that very* Evil, Darkness, Fire, and Wrath, and Disorder, which they first awakened and kindled both in themselves, and their Kingdom. And therefore it is a Truth of the utmost Certainty, that they can be no where, but where there is something of *that* Evil, still subsisting, which they brought forth. And this may pass for Demonstration (if there be any such thing) that the Scriptures themselves *demonstrate* the Place of this World, to be the *very* Place and Region, in which the Angels fell. And they still are *here*, because their Kingdom is not *wholly* delivered from all the Evil they had raised in it, but is to stand for a Time, only in a State of Recovery; where they themselves must see, in spite of all the Rage and Malice of their fiery Darts, that the *Mystery* of a Lamb of God, born upon Earth, will raise Creatures of Flesh and Blood, amidst the Ruins of their spoiled Kingdom, to be an Host of Angels in Heaven restored; and themselves plunged into an Hell, that is cut off from every Thing, but their *own* Wrath, Fire, and Darkness. And all this, ACADEMICUS, to make it known through all the Regions of

Eternity, that *Pride* can degrade the higheſt Angels into Devils, and *Humility* raiſe fallen Fleſh and Blood to the Thrones of Angels. This, this is the *great End* of God's raiſing a new Creation, out of the fallen Kingdom of Angels: for *this End* it ſtands in its State of War, a War betwixt the Fire and Pride of fallen Angels, and the Meekneſs and Humility of the Lamb of God; it ſtands its Thouſands of Years in this Strife, that the laſt Trumpet may ſound *this great* Truth, through all Heights and Depths of Eternity, *That Evil can have no Beginning, but from Pride; nor any End, but from Humility.*

O Academicus, what a Blindneſs there is in the World! What a Stir is there amongſt Mankind about *Religion*; and yet almoſt all ſeem to be afraid of *That*, in which alone is *Salvation!*

Poor Mortals! What is the one Wiſh and Deſire of your Hearts? What is it that you call Happineſs, and matter of Rejoicing? Is it not when every Thing about you helps you to ſtand upon *higher Ground*, gives full Nouriſhment to *Self-eſteem*, and gratifies every *Pride* of Life? And yet *Life* itſelf is the *Loſs* of every Thing, unleſs *Pride* be *overcome*. O, ſtop a while in Contemplation of this great Truth! It is a Truth as unchangeable as God;

God; it is written and ſpoken through all Nature; Heaven and Earth, fallen Angels, and redeemed Men, all bear Witneſs to it. The Truth is this: *Pride muſt die in you*, or *nothing of Heaven* can live in you. Under the Banner of this Truth, give up yourſelves to the meek and humble Spirit of the Holy Jeſus, the Overcomer of all Fire, and Pride, and Wrath. This is the one Way, the one Truth, and the one Life. There is no other open Door into the Sheepfold of God. Every Thing elſe is the *Working* of the Devil in the *fallen Nature* of Man. Humility muſt ſow the Seed, or there can be no Reaping in Heaven. Look not at Pride only as an unbecoming Temper; nor at Humility only as a decent Virtue: for the one is Death, and the other is Life; the one is all Hell, and the other is all Heaven.

So much as you have of Pride, ſo much you have of the fallen Angel alive in you; ſo much as you have of true Humility, ſo much you have of the Lamb of God within you. Could you ſee with your Eyes what *every Stirring* of Pride does to your Soul, you would beg of every thing you meet, to tear the Viper from you, though with the Loſs of an Hand, or an Eye. Could you ſee what a ſweet, divine, tranſforming Power there is in Humility, what an heavenly

Water of Life it gives to the fiery Breath of your Soul, how it expels the Poiſon of your fallen Nature, and makes room for the Spirit of God to live in you; you would rather wiſh to be the *Foot-ſtool* of all the World, than to want the ſmalleſt Degree of it. Excuſe, ACADEMICUS, this little Digreſſion, if it be ſuch; for the Subject we were upon, forced me into it.

ACAD. Indeed, Sir, the Leſſon you have here given, is the ſame that the whole Nature of the Fall of Angels, and the whole Nature of the Redemption of Man, daily reads to every Creature; and he, who alone can redeem the World, has plainly ſhewn us, wherein the Life and Spirit of our Redemption muſt conſiſt, when he ſaith, *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of Heart.* Now if this Leſſon is unlearnt, we muſt be ſaid to have *left* our Maſter, as thoſe Diſciples did, *who went back, and walked no more with him* *. But if you pleaſe, THEOPHILUS, we will now break off till the Afternoon.

THEOPH. Give me Leave firſt, ACADEMICUS, but juſt to mention one Point more, to ſhew you ſtill further, how unreaſonably your Friends object to the *Appeal* the Want

* John vi.

of

of the plain Letter of Scripture. Now let it be ſuppoſed, that the Account of the Fall of Angels, the Creation, *&c.* given in the *Appeal*, has not Scripture *enough*——Take then the contrary Opinion, which is that of your Friends; *viz.* That all Worlds, and all Things, are created *out of nothing*.

Shew me now, ACADEMICUS, I do not ſay a Text, but the *leaſt Hint* of Scripture, that, by all the Art of commenting, can ſo much as be drawn to look that Way. It is a *Fiction*, big with the groſſeſt Abſurdities, and *contrary* to every Thing that we know, either from Nature or Scripture, concerning the Riſe and Birth, and Nature of Things, that have begun to be. *Adam* was not created out of nothing; for the Letter of *Moſes* tells us in the plaineſt Words, *out of what* he was created or formed, both as to his inward, and his outward Nature. He tells us alſo as expreſly *out of what*, *Eve*, the next Creature, was created. But from the Time of *Adam* and *Eve*, the Creation of every human Creature is a Birth out of its Parents' Body and Soul, or whole Nature. And to ſhew us how *all Things*, or Worlds, as well as all living Creatures, are not created *out of nothing*, St. *Paul* appeals to this very Account that *Moſes* gives, of the Woman's being formed *out of the Man*;

but *all Things* (ſays he) *are out of God* *. Here this *Fiction* of a Creation *out of nothing*, is by the plain and open Letter of Scripture abſolutely removed from the whole Syſtem of created Things, or Things which begin to be; for St. *Paul*'s Doctrine is, that *all Things* come into Being, *out of God*, in the ſame Reality, as the Woman was formed or created *out of* Man. So again, *There is to us but one God, out of whom are all Things* †; for ſo you know the *Greek* ſhould be tranſlated, not of, but *out of* God; not of, but *out of* the Man. The *Fiction* therefore, which I ſpeak of, is not only without, but expreſly *contrary* to, the plain Letter of Scripture. For every Thing that we ſee, every Creature that has Life, is, by the Scripture-account, a *Birth* from *ſomething elſe*. And here, Sir, you are to take Notice of a *Maxim* that is not deniable, that the Reaſon why *any* Thing proceeds from a *Birth*, is the Reaſon why *every* Thing *muſt* do ſo. For a *Birth* would not be in Nature, but becauſe Birth is the *only* Procedure of Nature. Nature itſelf is a *Birth* from God, the *firſt Manifeſtation* of the hidden, inconceivable God; and is ſo far from being *out of* nothing, that it is the Manifeſtation of

* 1 Cor. xi. 12. † 1 Cor. viii. 6.

that

that in God, which was before unmanifeſt. As Nature is the firſt Birth, or Manifeſtation of God, or Diſcovery of the Divine Powers; ſo all Creatures are the *Manifeſtation* of the Powers of Nature, brought into a Variety of Births, by the Will of God, *out of* Nature. The firſt Creatures that are the neareſt to the Deity, are *out* of the higheſt Powers of Nature, by the Will of God; willing that Nature ſhould be manifeſted in the Riſe and Birth of Creatures *out* of it. Nature, directed and governed by the Wiſdom of God, goes on in the Birth of one Thing *out* of another. The ſpiritual Materiality of Heaven brings forth the Bodies, or heavenly Fleſh and Blood, of Angels, as the Materiality of this World brings forth the Birth of groſs Fleſh and Blood. The ſpiritual Materiality of Heaven, ſo far as the Extent of the Kingdom of fallen Angels reached, has, by various Changes occaſioned by their Fall, gone thro' a Variety of *Births*, or *Creations*, till ſome of it came down to the Thickneſs of *Air* and *Water*, and the Hardneſs of *Earth* and *Stones*. But when Things have ſtood in this State their appointed Time, the laſt purifying Fire, kindled by God, will take away all *Thickneſs*, *Hardneſs*, and *Darkneſs*, and bring all the divided Things and Elements of this

World

World back again, to be that firſt *glaſſy Sea*, or heavenly *Materiality*, in which the Throne of God is ſet, as was ſeen by St. *John*, in the Revelation made to him.

But the Fiction of the Creation *out of nothing*, is not only contrary to the Letter and Spirit of the Scripture-account of the Riſe and Birth of Things, but is in itſelf full of the groſſeſt Abſurdities, and horrid Conſequences. It *ſeparates* every Thing from God, it leaves *no Relation* between God and the Creature, nor any *Poſſibility* for any *Power*, *Virtue*, *Quality*, or *Perfection* of God to be in the Creature: for if it is created *out of nothing*, it cannot have *ſomething* of God in it. But I here ſtop: for, as you know, we have agreed, if God permit, to have hereafter one Day's entire Converſation on the Nature and End of the Writings of *Jacob Behmen*, and the right Uſe and Manner of reading them; and all that, as preparatory to a more correct *Engliſh Edition* of his Works, from the original *German* Language; ſo this and ſome other Points ſhall be adjourned to that Time. In the Afternoon, we will proceed only on ſuch Matters, as may farther ſet the Chriſtian Redemption in its true and proper Light before your Friend HUMANUS.

ACAD.

ACAD. I am very glad, THEOPHILUS, that I have mentioned theſe Objections to you, tho' they were of no Weight with me; ſince you have thereby had an Occaſion of giving ſo full an Anſwer to them. The Matter ſtands now in this plain and eaſy Point of Light:

In the *Appeal* we have a Syſtem of uniform Truths, concerning the Fall of Angels, their ſpoiled and darkened Kingdom, and the Creation of this World as raiſed out of it. We have the Creation and Fall of Man, his Regeneration, and the Manner of it, all opened and explained according to the *Letter and Tenor* of Scripture, from their deepeſt Ground, in ſuch a Manner, as to give Light and Clearneſs into all the Articles of the Chriſtian Faith; to expel all Difficulties and Abſurdities that had crept into it; and the whole Scheme of our Redemption is proved to be abſolutely neceſſary, both from Scripture, and all that is ſeen and known in Nature and Creature.

On the other hand, the Opinion which is, and muſt be received, if the Account in the *Appeal* is rejected, appears to be a *Fiction*, that has no Senſe, no Reaſon, no Fact, no Appearance in Nature, nor one ſingle Letter of Scripture, to ſupport it; but ſtands in the utmoſt Contrariety to all that the Scripture ſaith

ſaith of the Creation of every Thing; and is in itſelf full of the groſſeſt Abſurdities, raiſing Darkneſs and Difficulties in all Parts of Religion, that can never be removed from it. For a Creation that has nothing of God in it, can explain nothing that relates to God: for a Creation out of nothing, has no better Senſe in it, than a Creation *into nothing*. My Friends, for this time, Adieu.

The End of the Firſt DIALOGUE.

THE

SECOND DIALOGUE.

THEOPH. LET us now ſpeak of *Adam* in his firſt Perfection, created by God to be a Lord and Ruler of this new-created World, to people it with an Hoſt of angelic Men, till Time had finiſhed its Courſe, and all Things were fitted to be reſtored to that State, from which they were fallen by the Revolt of Angels.

For the Reſtoration of all Things to their firſt glorious State, by making the Good to overcome the Evil, was the End which God propoſed by the State and Manner of this new Creation.

Adam was the choſen Inſtrument of God, to conduct this whole Affair, to keep up this new-made World in the State in which God had created it; not *to till the Earth*, which we now plow; but to keep *That*, which is now called the *Curſe* in the Earth, *covered*, *hid*, and *overcome*, by that Paradiſe in which he was created. For this End, he was created in a two-fold Nature, of the Powers of Heaven, and the Powers of this World. Inwardly, he had the celeſtial Body and Soul of

of an Angel; and he had this angelic Nature united to a Life and Body taken from the Stars and Elements of this outward World. As Paradiſe overcame, and concealed all the Wrath of the Stars and Elements, and kept that *Evil*, which is called the *Curſe*, from being known or felt; ſo *Adam*'s angelic, heavenly Nature, which was the Paradiſe of God within him, kept him quite ignorant of the Properties of that earthly Nature that was under it. He knew, and ſaw, and felt, nothing in himſelf, but a Birth of Paradiſe; that is, a Life, Light, and Spirit of Heaven: for he had no Difference from an Angel in Heaven, but that this World was joined to him, and put under his Feet. And this was done, becauſe he was created by God to be the *reſtoring Angel*, to do all that in this outward World, which God would have to be done in it, before it could be reſtored to its firſt State. And therefore he muſt have the Nature of all this World in him, becauſe he was to act in it, and upon it, as its *reſtoring Angel*; and yet with ſuch Diſtinction from it, with ſuch Power upon it, and over it, as the Light has upon and over Darkneſs. Does not now the whole Spirit of the Scriptures conſent to this Account of *Adam*'s firſt Perfection? Do not all the chief Points of our Redemption demand

mand this Perfection in *Adam unfallen?* How elſe could his *Fall* bring on the Neceſſity of the Goſpel Redemption of a new Birth from above, of the *Word* and Holy Spirit of God? For had he not had this Perfection of Nature at firſt, his Redemption could not have conſiſted in the Revival of this Birth and Perfection in him. For had it been ſomething leſs than the Loſs of an angelic and heavenly Life, that had happened to him by his Fall; had it been only *ſome Evil*, that related to a Life of this World; nothing elſe but *ſome Remedy* from this World, could have been his Redemption. But ſince it is the Corner-ſtone of the Goſpel, that nothing leſs than the *Eternal Word*, which was Man's Creator, could be his Redeemer, and that by a new Birth from above; it is a Demonſtration, that he was at firſt created an Angel; born from above, and ſuch a Partaker of the Divine Life, as the Angels are; and that his Fall was a real Death or Extinction of his angelic Life.

Now the Letter of *Moſes* is expreſs for this firſt Perfection of *Adam*. God ſaid, *Let us make Man in our own Image, after our Likeneſs*. How different is this from the Creation of the Animals of this World? What can you think or ſay higher of an Angel? Or what Perfection can an Angel have,

have, but that of being in the Image and after the Likeneſs of God? But now what an Abſurdity would it be, to hold, that *Adam* was created in the Image and Likeneſs of God, and yet had not in him ſo much as the Image and Likeneſs of an Angel? Again, was not Paradiſe loſt, was not *Evil* and the *Curſe* awakened in all the Elements, as ſoon as *Adam* fell? And does not this prove, beyond all Contradiction, that *Adam* was created by God, as I ſaid above, to be the *reſtoring Angel*; to have Power over all the outward World; to keep all its Evil from being known or felt; till the Fall of Angels from Heaven had been repaired by a Race of angelic Men born on Earth? But how could he do, and be all this, for which he was created by God; how could he keep up the Life of Heaven and Paradiſe in himſelf, and this new World; unleſs the Life of Heaven had been his own Life? Or how could he be the Father of an Offſpring that were to have no Evil, nor ſo much as the Knowledge of what was Good and Evil in this World? Could any Thing but an heavenly Man bring forth an heavenly Offſpring? Or could he be ſaid to have the Life of this World opened in him in his Creation, who was to bring forth a Race of Beings, inſenſible of the Good and Evil in this World?

For

For every Thing that has the Life of this World opened in it, is under an abſolute Neceſſity of knowing and feeling its Good and Evil.

Secondly, That *Adam*, when he firſt entered into the World, had the Nature and Perfection of an Angel, is further plain from *Moſes*, who tells us, that he was made at firſt both Male and Female in one Perſon; and that *Eve*, or the Female Part of him, was afterwards taken out of him. Now this Union of the Male and Female in him, was the *Purity*, or *Virgin Perfection*, of his Life, and is the very Perfection of the angelic Nature. This we are aſſured of from our Lord himſelf, who, in Anſwer to the Queſtion of the *Sadducees*, ſaid unto them; *Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, and the Power of God; for in the Reſurrection they neither marry, nor are given in Marriage, but are as the Angels in Heaven* *. Or, as in St. *Luke*, *for they are equal to the Angels of God*. Here we have a twofold Proof of the angelic Perfection of *Adam*: (1.) Becauſe we are told, that that State in which he was created, neither Male nor Female, but with both Natures in his one Perſon, is the very Nature and Perfection of the Angels of God in Heaven. (2.) Be-

* Matt. xxii. 29, 30.

cauſe every one who ſhall have a Part in this Reſurrection, ſhall then have this angelic Perfection again; to be no more Male or Female, or a Part of the Humanity; but ſuch perfect, complete, undivided Creatures, as the Angels of God are. But now this Perfection could not belong to the Humanity after the Reſurrection, but becauſe it belonged to the firſt Man before his Fall: "for nothing will be reſtored, but that "which was firſt loſt; nothing riſe again, "but that which ſhould not have died; "nor any Thing be united, but that which "ſhould not have been parted." The ſhort is this: Man is *at laſt* to have a Nature equal to that of the Angels. This Equality conſiſts in this; that as they have, ſo the Humanity will have, both Male and Female Nature in one Perſon.

But the Humanity was thus created at firſt, Male and Female in one Perſon; therefore the Humanity had at *firſt* a Nature and Perfection equal to that of the Angels. Thus is the Letter of *Moſes* much more plain for the angelic Perfection of *Adam* in his Creation, than it is for the Reſurrection of the Dead; and yet we have our Lord's Word for it, that *Moſes* ſufficiently proved the Reſurrection of the Dead. What ſay you, ACADEMICUS, to this Matter?

ACAD.

ACAD. I will here just mention what my good old *Tutor* says: The Author of the *Appeal*, says he, founds all his Scheme of Regeneration or Redemption on a supposed *threefold Life*, in which *Adam* was created. His sole Proof of this threefold Life is taken from this Text of *Moses: God breathed into Man the Breath of Lives, and Man became a living Soul.* From this Phrase, *The Breath of Lives, the Appeal*, without any Authority from the Text, observes thus; *Here the highest, and most Divine Original is not darkly, but openly, absolutely, and in the strongest Form of Expression, ascribed to the Soul, &c.* A vain Assertion, says my Tutor; for the *Breath of Life* or Lives is used by *Moses* only as a Phrase for *animal Life*. This is plainly seen, *Gen.* vii. *ver.* 21. *And all Flesh died — all in whose Nostrils was the Breath of Lives.*

Behold, says he, the very Phrase, which the *Appeal* takes to be so full a Proof of the high Dignity, and threefold Life of God in the Soul, here made use of to denote the Life of every kind of Animal—And therefore, says he, if this *Phrase* proves the Soul of *Adam* to be a *Mirror of the Holy Trinity*, it proves the same of every Breath in the Nostrils of every Creature.

THEOPH. To make ſhort work, ACADEMICUS, with your Tutor's Confutation, as he thinks, of the capital Doctrine of the *Appeal*, I ſhall only quote the whole Period, as it ſtands in the *Appeal*. " *God breathed* in- " to him *the Breath of Lives* (Spiraculum " vitarum) *and Man became a living Soul.* " Here, ſays the *Appeal*, the Notion of a " Soul, created *out of nothing*, is in the " plaineſt ſtrongeſt Manner rejected by the " firſt written Word of God; and no *Jew* " or *Chriſtian* can have the leaſt Excuſe for " falling into *ſuch* an Error: here the " *higheſt and moſt Divine* Original is not " darkly, but openly, abſolutely aſcribed to " the Soul. It came forth as a Breath of " Life, or Lives, out of, and from the " Mouth of God; and therefore did not " come out of the *Womb* of *nothing*; but is " what it is, and has what it has in itſelf, " *from*, and *out of*, *the* firſt and higheſt of " all Beings *." Here, ACADEMICUS, behold the Falſeneſs and Weakneſs of your Tutor's Obſervation. — The *Appeal*, you plainly ſee, proves only, from the Text of *Moſes*, the high Original of the Soul; and only for this Reaſon, becauſe it is the *Breath of God*, breathed into Man. The *Appeal* makes no Uſe of the Expreſſion, the *Breath*

* Appeal, p. 2.

of

of Lives, takes no Notice of it, deduces nothing from it; but *ſolely* conſiders the *Act* of God, as *breathing* the Spirit of the Soul from himſelf; and from this *Act* of God, the high Birth and Dignity of the Soul is moſt juſtly affirmed. And the *Appeal* makes this Obſervation *ſolely* to prove, that the Soul is not created *out of nothing*. This is the one, ſole, open, and declared Intent of the *Appeal*, in all this Paragraph. But your Tutor, overlooking all this, though nothing elſe is there, makes the Author of the *Appeal* to affirm the threefold Life of God in the Soul, merely from the Phraſe of the *Breath of Lives*, when there is not one ſingle Word about it. For the *Appeal* not only has not the leaſt Hint in this Place of any ſuch Matter, to be proved from the *Breath of Lives*; but through the whole Book there is not the ſmalleſt Regard paid to this Expreſſion, nor any Argument ever deduced from it. How ſtrange is all this in your good old Tutor!

The Matter is plainly this: the Author of the *Appeal* looks wholly to the *Action* of God, *breathing* his own Spirit into *Adam*; and from this Breathing, he juſtly affirms the *Divine Nature* of the Soul; all his Argument is deduced from thence. Now if your Tutor, or any one elſe, could ſhew, that

God *breathed* his own Spirit into every Animal, and with this Intent, that it might come forth in his own Image and Likeneſs; then the Diſtinction and high Birth of the Soul, pleaded for by the *Appeal*, would indeed be loſt. But till then, the *Appeal* muſt, and therefore will for ever, ſtand unconfuted in its Aſſertion of the Dignity and Divine Birth of the Soul.

Again; behold, ACADEMICUS, a ſtill further Weakneſs chargeable upon your Tutor. You have ſeen, that his Reaſoning upon the *Breath of Lives*, is meddling with ſomething that the *Appeal* meddles not with, makes no Account of: but your Tutor has conjured it up for his own Uſe; and yet ſee what a poor Uſe he makes of it. He affirms that *Moſes* uſes only the *Breath of Lives*, as a Phraſe for animal Life. How does he prove this? Why, truly from this Reaſon; becauſe *Moſes* uſes the ſame Phraſe when he ſpeaks of the Lives of all Animals.

Now does not every *Engliſhman* know, that we make uſe of the ſame *four Letters* of the Alphabet, when we ſay the *Life* of a Man, the *Life* of a Beaſt, and the *Life* of a Plant? That we uſe the ſame *five Letters*, when we ſay the *Death* of a Man, the *Death* of a Beaſt, and the *Death* of a Plant? But will it thence follow, that the Life and Death

Death of Men, and Beaſts, and Plants, are of the ſame Nature and Degree, and have the ſame Good and Evil in them? Yet this is full as well, as to conclude, that the Breath of Life in Man, and the Breath of Life in Animals, is of the ſame *Nature* and *Degree*, has the ſame *Goodneſs* and *Excellency* in it; becauſe the ſame Words, made up of the ſame Letters, expreſs them both. Your Tutor therefore, ACADEMICUS, and not the Author of the *Appeal*, is the Perſon that reaſons weakly from the Phraſe of *the Breath of Lives*; for that Author never ſo much as offers to argue from it. His Proof of the threefold Life of God in the Soul, ſo far as it is deduced from the Text of *Moſes*, lies wholly in this; that it is the Breath and Spirit of the triune God, breathed forth from this triune Deity into Man. This, ſure, is no ſmall Proof of its having the triune Nature of God in it. And this threefold Life of the Soul, thus plainly deducible from the Letter of *Moſes*, is ſhewn to be abſolutely certain, from every chief *Doctrine* and Inſtitution, nay, from the *whole Nature* of our Redemption: and all the Goſpel is ſhewn to ſet its Seal to this great Truth, the *threefold Life* of God in the Soul. Nay, every Thing in Nature, Fire, and Light, and Air; every Thing that we know of Angels,

of Devils, of the animal Life of this World; is, in the plaineſt and ſtrongeſt Manner, from the Beginning to the End of the *Appeal*, made ſo many Proofs of the threefold Life of the triune God in the Soul. Thus ſays the *Appeal*; *No* Omnipotence *can make you a Partaker of the Life of this outward World, without having the Life of this outward World born in your own creaturely Being*; the Fire, and Light, and Air of this World, muſt have their Birth in your own creaturely Being, or you cannot poſſibly live in, or have a Life from *outward Nature*. And therefore no Omnipotence can make you a Partaker of the beatific Life, or Preſence of the Holy Trinity; unleſs that Life ſtands in the ſame triune State within you, as it does without you *. Again: ſearch to Eternity, ſays the *Appeal*, why no Devil or Beaſt can poſſibly enter into Heaven, and there can only this one Reaſon be aſſigned for it; becauſe neither of them have the *triune* holy Life of God in them †. But enough of this Miſtake of your good old Tutor, Rusticus will, I am afraid, chide you for being the Occaſion of this long Digreſſion from the Point we were ſpeaking to.

Rust. Truly, Sir, I do not know what to make of theſe great Scholars; they ſeem

* Appeal, p. 51. † P. 53.

to

to have more Love for the Shadow of an Objection, than for the moſt ſubſtantial Truths. I think I here ſee great Reaſon, why our Saviour choſe poor and illiterate Fiſhermen to be his Apoſtles. St. *Paul* was the only Man that had ſome Learning, and he was a Perſecutor of Chriſt, till ſuch Time as God made *as it were Scales* to fall from his Eyes——and then he became a powerful Apoſtle. But let us return to your Account of the firſt created Perfection of Man, and the Degree of his falling from it. It is one of the beſt Doctrines that I ever heard in my Life. It not only ſtirs up every Thing that is good, and makes me hate every Thing that is evil, in me; but it gives ſo good a Senſe, ſo ſound a Meaning to every Myſtery of the Goſpel, that it makes every Thing our Saviour has done for us, and every Thing he requires of us, to be equally neceſſary and beneficial to us. But ſuppoſe now, our Fall not to be a Change of Nature, not a *Death* to our firſt Life; but only a ſingle Sin or Miſtake in the firſt Man; what a Difficulty is there in ſuppoſing ſo great a Scheme of Redemption to ſet right a ſingle Miſtake in one ſingle Creature? Again; What could Man have to do with Angels and Heaven, if, at his Creation, he had not had the Nature of

Heaven

Heaven and Angels in him? But pray, Sir, begin again juſt where you left off.

THEOPH. I was indeed, RUSTICUS, at that Time juſt going to ſay, that *Adam* had loſt much of his firſt Perfection before his *Eve* was taken out of him; which was done to prevent worſe Effects of his Fall, and to prepare a Means for his Recovery, when his Fall ſhould become total, as it afterwards was, upon the eating of the earthly Tree of Good and Evil.

It is not good that Man ſhould be alone, ſaith the Scripture: this ſhews, that *Adam* had altered his firſt State, had brought ſome *Beginning* of Evil into it, and had made *that* not to be good, which God ſaw to be good, when he created him. And therefore as a leſs Evil, and to prevent a greater, God divided the firſt perfect human Nature into two Parts, into a Male and a Female Creature; and this, as you ſhall ſee by and by, was a wonderful Inſtance of the Love and Care of God towards this new Humanity. It was at firſt, the total Humanity in one Creature, who ſhould, in that State of Perfection, have brought forth his own Likeneſs out of himſelf, in ſuch *Purity* of Love, and ſuch *Divine Power*, as he himſelf was brought forth by God: the Manner of his own Birth from God, was the Manner that his own Offſpring

Offspring ſhould have had a Birth from him; all done by the pure Power of a Divine Love. Man ſtood no longer in the Perfection of his firſt State, as a Birth of Divine Love, than whilſt he loved himſelf *only* as God loved him, as in the *Image*, and *after the Likeneſs of God*. This *Purity* of Love, and Delight in the Image of God, would have carried on the Birth of the Humanity, in the ſame Manner, and by the ſame Divine Power, as the firſt Man was brought forth: for it was only a Continuation of the ſame generating Love that gave Birth to the firſt Man. But *Adam* turned away his Love from the Divine Image, which he ſhould only have loved, and deſired to propagate out of himſelf. He gazed upon this outward World, and let in an adulterate Love into his Heart, which deſired to know the Life that was in this World. This impure Deſire brought the Nature of this World into him. His firſt Love, and Divine Power, had no Strength left in it; it was no longer a Power of bringing forth a Divine Birth from himſelf. His firſt Virginity was loſt by an *adulterate* Love, which had turned its Deſire into this World. This State of *Inability*, is that which is called his falling into a deep Sleep; and in this Sleep, God divided

divided this overcome Humanity into a Male and Female.

The firſt Step therefore towards the Redemption or Recovery of Man, *beginning* to fall, was the taking his *Eve* out of him, that ſo he might have a *ſecond Trial* in Paradiſe; in which if he failed, another effectual Redeemer might ariſe out of the *Seed of the Woman*. O my Friends, what a wonderful Procedure is there to be ſeen in the Divine Providence, turning all Evil, as ſoon as it appears, into a further Diſplay and Opening of new Wonders of the Wiſdom and Love of God! Look back to the firſt Evil, which the Fall of Angels brought forth. The Darkneſs, Wrath, and Fire, of fallen Nature, was immediately taken from them, and turned into a new Creation; where thoſe apoſtate Angels were to ſee all the Evil that they had raiſed in their Kingdom, turned againſt them, and made the Ground of a new Race of Beings, who were to poſſeſs thoſe Thrones which they had loſt. Look now at *Adam* brought into the World in ſuch an angelic Nature, as he, and all his redeemed Sons, will have after the Reſurrection; an Angel at firſt, and an Angel at laſt; with Time, and Miſery, and Sin, and Death, and Hell, all of them felt, and all overcome,

overcome, betwixt the two glorious Extremes. When this firſt human Angel, through a *falſe*, *impure* Love, loſt the Divine Power of generating his own Likeneſs out of himſelf, God took Part of his Nature from him, that ſo the Eye of his Deſire, which was turned to the Life of this World, might be directed to that Part of his Nature which was taken from him. And this is the Reaſon of my ſaying before, that this was choſen as a leſs Evil, and to avoid a greater; for it was a leſs Degree of falling from his firſt Perfection, to love the Female Part of his own divided Nature, than to turn his Love towards that, which was ſo much lower than his own Nature. And thus, at *that Time*, *Eve* was an *Help*, that was truly and properly *meet* for him, ſince he had loſt his firſt Power of being himſelf the Parent of an angelic Offſpring, and ſtood with a longing Eye, looking towards the Life of this World.

But the moſt glorious Effect of this Diviſion into Male and Female is yet to come. For when *Adam* and *Eve* had joined in the eating of the Tree of Good and Evil, and ſo were totally fallen from God and Paradiſe, into the Miſery and Slavery of the beſtial Life of this World; when this greateſt of all Evils had thus happened to theſe two

divided

divided Parts of the Humanity; when all the Angel was loſt, and nothing but a ſhameful, frighted Animal of this World, was to be ſeen in this divided Male and Female; then in, and by, and through this Diviſion, did God open and eſtabliſh the glorious Scheme of an *univerſal* Redemption to theſe fallen Creatures, and all their Offſpring, by the myſterious *Seed* of the *Woman*.

Had *Adam* ſtood in his firſt State of Perfection, as a Birth of Divine Love, and loving only the Divine Image and Likeneſs in himſelf, this Love would have been itſelf the fruitful Parent of an holy Offſpring; no *Eve* had been taken out of him, nor any Male or Female ever known in human Nature: all his Poſterity had been in him ſecured, and the earthly Tree of Good and Evil had never been ſeen in Paradiſe. But though he loſt this firſt generating Power of Divine Love, and ſtood as a barren Tree; yet ſeeing God's Purpoſe of raiſing an Offſpring from *Adam*, to poſſeſs the Thrones of fallen Angels, muſt go on and ſucceed, therefore that *Adam* might yet have an Offſpring, God took from him that, which is called the Female Part of his Nature; that, by this Means, both a *Poſterity*, and a *Saviour*, might proceed from him: for through this

Diviſion

Diviſion of Man, God would, in a wonderful Manner, do *that* which *Adam* ſhould have done, before he was divided.

For out of this Female Part, and after the Fall, God would raiſe, without the Help of *Adam*, that ſame glorious angelic Man, which *Adam* ſhould have brought forth before, and without his *Eve*; which glorious Man is therefore called the Second *Adam*: 1. As having in his Humanity that very Perfection which the Firſt *Adam* had in his Creation. 2. Becauſe he was to do all that for Mankind, by a Birth of Redemption from him, which they ſhould have had by a Birth of Nature from *Adam*, had he kept his firſt State of Perfection. What ſay you, ACADEMICUS, to all this?

ACAD. Truly, Sir, there ſeems to be ſo much Light, and Truth, and Scripture, for all this Account that you have given of theſe Matters, as muſt even force one to conſent to it. But then all our Syſtems of Divinity, to which learned Men are chained, are quite ſilent of theſe Matters. I never before heard of this *gradual Fall of Adam*, nor this angelic State of his firſt Creation, and Power of bringing forth his own Offſpring; and therefore can hardly believe it ſo ſtrongly as I would, and as the Truth ſeems to demand of me.

RUST.

RUST. Pray, Sir, let me ſpeak to ACADEMICUS: he ſeems to be ſo hampered with Learning, that I can hardly be ſorry, that I am not a great Scholar.

Can any Thing be more punctually related in Scripture, than the *gradual Fall of Adam?* Do not you ſee, that he was created firſt with both Natures in him? Is it not expreſly told you, that *Eve* was not taken out of him, till ſuch Time as it was *not good* for him to be as he then *was*; and yet God ſaw that was good when he created him? Is it not plain therefore, that he had fallen from the Goodneſs of his firſt Creation; and therefore his Fall was not at once, nor total, till his eating of the earthly Tree? Again, as to his being an *Angel* at his firſt Creation, becauſe of both Natures in him; is it not ſufficiently plain from his being to be an Angel of the ſame Nature at laſt, in the Reſurrection? For this is an Axiom that cannot be ſhaken, that "*Nothing can riſe higher*, than its *firſt* "*created Nature*;" and therefore an Angel at laſt, muſt have been an Angel at firſt. Do you think it poſſible for an Ox in Tract of Time to be changed into a rational Philoſopher? Yet this is as poſſible, as for a Man that has only by his Creation the Life of this World in him, to be changed into an Angel of Heaven. The Life of this World

can

can reach no further than this World; no Omnipotence of God can carry it further; and therefore, if Man is to be an Angel at the laſt, and have the Life of Heaven in him, he muſt of all Neceſſity, in his Creation, have been created an Angel, and had his Life kindled from Heaven; " becauſe no " Creature can poſſibly have any other Life, " or higher Degree of Life, than that which " his Creation brought forth in him."

THEOPH. Marvel not, ACADEMICUS, at that which has been ſaid, of the firſt Power of *Adam* to generate in a divine Manner an holy Offspring, by the Power of that divine Love which gave Birth to himſelf; for he was born of that Love for no other End, than to multiply Births of it; and whilſt his Love continued to be *one* with that Love, which brought him into Being, nothing was impoſſible to it. For Love is the great Creating *Fiat* that brought forth every Thing, that is diſtinct from God; and is the only working Principle that ſtirs, and effects every Thing that is done in Nature and Creature. Love is the *Principle* of Generation from the higheſt to the loweſt of Creatures; it is the firſt Beginning of every Seed of Life; every Thing has its Form from it; every Thing that is born, is born in the Likeneſs, and with the Fruit-

fulneſs, of that ſame Love that generateth and beareth it; and this is its own Seed of Love within itſelf, and is its Power of fructifying in its Kind.

Love is the holy, heavenly, magic Power of the Deity, the firſt *Fiat* of God; and all Angels, and eternal Beings, are the firſt Births of it. The Deity delights in beholding the ideal Images, which riſe up and appear in the Mirror of his own eternal Wiſdom. This Delight becomes a loving Deſire to have living Creatures in the Form of theſe Ideas; and this loving Deſire is the *generating*, heavenly Parent, out of which Angels, and all eternal Beings, are born. Every Birth in Nature is a Conſequence of this firſt prolific Love of the Deity, and generates from that which began the firſt Birth. Hence it is, that through all the Scale of Beings, from the Top to the Bottom of Nature, Love is the *one Principle* of Generation of every Life; and every Thing generates from the ſame Principle, and by the ſame Power, by which itſelf was generated. Marvel not, therefore, my Friend, that *Adam*, ſtanding in the *Power* of his firſt Birth, ſhould have a divine Power of bringing forth his own Likeneſs. But I muſt now tell you, that the greateſt Proof of this glorious Truth is yet to come: for I will

ſhew

ſhew you, that all the Goſpel bears Witneſs to that heavenly Birth, which we ſhould have had from *Adam* alone.—This Birth from *Adam* is ſtill the one Purpoſe of God, and muſt be the *one Way* of all thoſe that are to riſe with Chriſt, to an Equality with the Angels of God. All muſt be Children of *Adam*; for all that are born of Man and Woman, muſt lay aſide this polluted Birth, and be born again of a ſecond *Adam*, in that ſame Perfection of an holy angelic Nature, which they ſhould have had from the firſt *Adam*, before his *Eve* was ſeparated from him. For it is an undeniable Truth of the Goſpel, that we are called to a new Birth, different in its whole Nature from that which we have from Man and Woman, or there is no Salvation; and therefore it is certain from the Goſpel, that the Birth which we have from *Adam*, divided into Male and Female, is not the Birth that we ſhould have had, becauſe it is the one Reaſon, why we are under a Neceſſity of being born again of a Birth from a ſecond *Adam*, who is to generate us again in that Purity and divine Power, in and by which we ſhould have been born of the firſt angelic *Adam*.

A divine Love in the firſt pure and holy *Adam*, united with the Love of God, willing

him to be the Father of an holy Offspring, was to have given Birth to a Race of Creatures from him. But *Adam* fulfilled not this Purpose of God; he awakened in himself a false Love; and so all his Offspring were forced to be born of Man and Woman, and thereby to have such *impure* Flesh and Blood as cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Is not this Proof enough, that this Birth from *Adam* and *Eve* is not the *first Birth* that we should have had? Will any one say, How could *Adam* have such a Power to bring forth a Birth in such a *Spiritual* Way, and so contrary to the present State of Nature? The whole Nature of the Gospel is a full Answer to this Question. For are we not all to be born again in the *same Spiritual* Way, and are we not, merely by a Spiritual Power, to have a Birth of heavenly Flesh and Blood? The Strangeness of such a Power in the first *Adam*, is only just so strange, and hard to be believed, as the same Power in the second *Adam*; and who is called the second *Adam* for no other Reason, but because he stands in the *Place* of the first, and is to do *That*, which the first should have done. And therefore our having from him a new heavenly Flesh and Blood raised in us by a *Spiritual Way*, superior to the common Way of Birth in this World, is the strongest

ſtrongeſt of Proofs, that we ſhould have been born of *Adam* in the *ſame Spiritual* Power, and ſo contrary to the Birth of Animals into this World. For all that we have from the ſecond *Adam*, is a Proof that we ſhould have had the ſame from *Adam* the firſt. A divine *Love* in *Adam* the firſt, was to have brought forth an holy Offſpring: a divine *Faith* now takes its Place, in the ſecond Birth, and is to generate a new Birth from the ſecond *Adam*; is to eat his Fleſh, and drink his Blood, by the ſame divine Power, by which we ſhould have had a Birth of the angelic Fleſh and Blood of our firſt Parent. Thus, ACADEMICUS, is this Birth from *Adam alone* no Whimſy, or Fiction, or fine-ſpun Notion, but the very Birth that the Goſpel abſolutely requires, as the Subſtance of our Redemption. There is no Room to deny it, without denying the whole Nature of our Redemption. On the other hand, the Birth that we have from *Adam* divided into *Male* and *Female*, is through all Scripture declared to be the Birth of *Miſery*, of *Shame*, of *Pollution*, of *ſinful* Fleſh and Blood; and is only a Ground and Reaſon, why we muſt be born again of other Fleſh and Blood, before we can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. This Truth therefore, that we were to have had an heavenly Birth from

Adam, depends not upon this or that particular Text of Scripture, but is affirmed by the whole Nature of our Redemption, and the whole Spirit of Scripture, repreſenting our Birth from this World as ſhameful as that of the wild Aſs's Colt, and calling for a new Birth from above, as abſolutely neceſſary, if Man is to have a Place amongſt the Angels of God. And therefore it may be affirmed, that ſo ſure as it is from Scripture, that Chriſt is become our ſecond *Adam*, to help us to *ſuch* a Birth, ſo ſure is it from Scripture, that we ſhould have had the *ſame Birth* from our firſt Parent, who, if not fallen, could have wanted no Redeemer of his Offſpring, and therefore muſt have brought forth that *ſame Birth*, which we have from Chriſt, but could not have from the Birth of Man and Woman. I muſt now only juſt mention to you a Paſſage much to the Matter in Hand, taken from the ſecond Epiſtle of St. *Clemens*, a Biſhop of *Rome*, who lived in the very Time of the Apoſtles. He relates, that Chriſt being aſked, when his Kingdom ſhould come, gave this Anſwer: *When two Things ſhall become one, and that which is outward be as that which is inward, the Male with the Female, and neither Man nor Woman.* There wants no Comment here: I ſhall only obſerve, that the Meaning

of

of the Words, *When that which is outward shall be as that which is inward,* seems plainly to be this, when the outward Life or Birth is come to be as the inward, angelic Life is, then the Birth will be one, the Male and Female in one, and then the Kingdom of God is come. These Words were in the next Century quoted by *Clemens* of *Alexandria*, though with some Alteration. The same Author also relates another Answer given by our Lord to much the same Question, put by *Salome*, where our Lord's Answer was thus: *When ye shall have put off, or away, the Garment of Shame and Ignominy, and when two shall become one, the Male and the Female united, and neither Man nor Woman.* The Garment of Shame and Ignominy, is plainly that Cloathing of Flesh and Blood, at the Sight of which both *Adam* and *Eve* were ashamed.

ACAD. I am fully satisfied, THEOPHILUS, with the Account you have given of the first Perfection, and divine State of our first Parent. And I think nothing can be plainer, than that we were to have been born of him to the same heavenly Birth, which we now are to receive from Christ, our second *Adam*. But I must still say, that I am afraid, your Critical Adversaries will here find some Pretence, to charge you with a

Tendency, at leaſt, to that Hereſy, which held Marriage to be unlawful, ſince you here hold, that it came in by *Adam*'s falling from his firſt Perfection.

THEOPH. I own, my Friend, that there is no knowing when one is ſafe from Men of that Stamp. But as for me, my Eye is only upon Truth; and where-ever that leads, there I follow; they, if they pleaſe, may perſecute it with Objections. Here is not the leaſt Pretence for the Charge you ſpeak of: for here is no more Condemnation of Marriage, as *unlawful*, than there is a Condemnation of God, for keeping up the State, and Life of this World. The Continuation of the World, though fallen, is a glorious Proof and Inſtance of the Goodneſs of God, that ſo a Race of new-born Angels may be brought forth in it. Happy therefore is it, that we have ſuch a World as this to be born into, ſince we are only born, to be born again to the Life of Heaven. Now Marriage has the Nature of this fallen World; but it is God's appointed Means of raiſing the Seed of *Adam* to its full Number. Honourable therefore is Marriage in our fallen State, and happy is it for Man to derive his Life from it, as it helps him to a Power of being eternally a Son of God.

Nor

Nor does this Original of Marriage, caſt the ſmalleſt Reflection upon the *Sex*, as if they brought *all*, or *any*, Impurity into the human Nature. No, by no means. The Impurity lies in the *Diviſion*, and that which *cauſed it*, and not in either of the divided Parts. And the Female Part has this Diſtinction, though not to boaſt of, yet to take Comfort in, that the Saviour of the World is called the *Seed of the Woman*, and had his Birth only from the female Part of our divided Nature. But, RUSTICUS, I ſee, wants to ſpeak.

RUST. Indeed, Sir, I do. But it is only to obſerve to you, what a Syſtem of ſolid, harmonious, and great Truths are here opened to our View, by this Conſideration of the firſt angelic State of *Adam*, and his falling from it into an earthly animal Life of this World; created at firſt an human Angel, with an Hoſt of Angels in his Loins, and then falling from this State, with this particular Circumſtance, that he had not only undone himſelf, but had alſo involved an innocent and almoſt numberleſs Poſterity in the ſame Miſery, who now muſt all be born of him in his fallen Condition. Thus looking at this Creation of ſo noble and high a Creature, and his Fall, as introducing ſo extenſive a Train of Miſery, how worthy of God,

God, how becoming a Love and Wiſdom that are infinite, does all the ſtupendous Myſtery of our Redemption appear! It was to reſtore an Angel, big with an angelic Offspring; an Angel that God had created to carry on the great Work of this new Creation, to bring Time with all its Conqueſts back into Eternity; an Angel in whom, and with whom, were fallen an innocent, numberleſs Poſterity, that had not yet begun to breathe.

What a Senſe and Reaſonableneſs does this State of Things give to all thoſe Paſſages of Scripture, which bring a God incarnate from Heaven, to remedy this ſad Scene of Miſery, that was opened on Earth? What leſs than God, could awaken again the dead angelic Life? What leſs than God's entering into the human Birth itſelf, and becoming one of it, and with it, could generate again the Life of God in every human Birth? The *Scripture* ſaith, *God ſo loved the World——God ſpared not his only Son——Chriſt laid down his Life for us*, &c. How glorious a Senſe is there in all theſe Sayings, when it is conſidered, that all this was done for ſo high and divine a Creature, created by God for ſuch great Ends, and full of a Poſterity, that was to have filled an Heaven reſtored? In this Light, every Part of

of our Redemption gives a Glory, a Wisdom, and Goodness to God, which far surpasses every other View, we can possibly take of them: whereas if you *lessen* this angelic Dignity of the first Man; if you suppose his Fall to be *less* than that of falling, with all his Posterity, from an *angelic* Life, into the *earthly*, *animal Life* of this World, Slaves to Sin and Misery; all the Fabric of our Redemption is full of such Wonders, as can only be wondered at. Thus, if you consider this World, and Man its highest Inhabitant, as made out of nothing, and with only the Breath of this earthly Life breathed into his Nostrils; what is there to call for this great Redemption from Heaven?

Again, if you consider the Fall of Man, only as a *single Act* of Disobedience to a *positive*, *arbitrary* Command of God, this is to make all the Consequences of his Fall inexplicable. For had the first Sin been only a *single Act* of Disobedience, it had been more worthy of Pardon, than any other Sin, merely because it was the first, and by a Creature that had as yet no Experience. But to make the first single Act of Disobedience, not only *unpardonable*, but the Cause of such a Curse and Variety of Misery entailed upon all his Posterity, from the Beginning to the End of Time; and to suppose,

poſe, that ſo much Wrath was raiſed in God at this ſingle Act of Diſobedience, as that nothing could make an Atonement for it, but the ſtupendous Myſtery of the Birth, Sufferings, and Death, of the Son of God; is yet further impoſſible to be accounted for. In this Caſe, the ſuppoſed Wrath, and Goodneſs of God, are equally inexplicable. —— And from hence alone, have ſprung up the deteſtable Doctrines, about the *Guilt* and *Imputation* of the firſt Sin, and the ſeveral Sorts of partial, abſolute Elections, and Reprobations, of ſome to eternal Happineſs, and others to be Fire-brands of Hell to all Eternity. Deteſtable may they well be called, ſince if *Lucifer* could truly ſay, that God from all Eternity determined and created him to be *that* wicked helliſh Creature that he is, he might then add, *Not unto him*, but *unto his Creator*, muſt all his Wickedneſs be aſcribed. How innocent, how tolerable is the Error of Tranſubſtantiation, when compared with this abſolute Election and Reprobation! It indeed cannot be reconciled to our Senſes and Reaſon; but then it leaves God, and Heaven, poſſeſſed of all that is holy and good: but this Reprobation-Doctrine, not only overlooks all Senſe and Reaſon, but confounds Heaven and Hell, takes all Goodneſs from the Deity,

Deity, and leaves us nothing to deteſt in the Sinner, but God's eternal, irreſiſtible Contrivance to make him to be ſuch.

But now, when we take this Matter of the Creation, and Fall of Man, as Truth, and Fact, and Scripture, plainly repreſent it, every Thing that can awaken in ourſelves a Love of, and Deſire to be like unto God, is to be found in it. Whilſt Man ſtood in his firſt Perfection, unturned from God, this World was under his Feet; Paradiſe was the Element in which he lived; the *Spirit* of God was his Life; the *Son* of God was his Light; he was in the World, as much above it, and with as full Diſtinction from it, as incapable of being hurt by it, as an Angel, that only comes with a divine Commiſſion into it. The whole World was a Gift, put into his Hands; the Standing, or Fall of it, was left to him; as his Will and Mind ſhould *work*, ſo ſhould either Paradiſe, or a curſed Earth, overcome. God, by this new Creation, had ſo altered the wrathful State of *Lucifer*'s fallen Kingdom, that the Evil that had been raiſed in it, was hid and overcome by the Good. It was thus created, and put into this new State, for this ſole End, that an human Angel might keep Paradiſe alive, and bring forth a paradiſiacal Hoſt of Angels, in the

the very Place, where the fallen Angels had brought forth their Evil. But all theſe great Things, depended upon *Adam*'s conforming to the Deſigns of God, and living in this World in ſuch a State, as God had created him in. He could not conform to the Deſigns of God any other Way, than by the *Rectitude* of his *Will*, willing that which God willed, both in the Creation of him, and the World.

Whilſt his Will ſtood thus inclined, the new Creation was preſerved, himſelf was an Angel, and the World a Paradiſe. No Evil would have been known either in Plant, or Fruit, or Animal; nor could have been known, but by the *declining Will*, and Deſire of Man calling it forth. His firſt *longing Look* towards the Knowledge of the Life of this World, was the firſt *looſening* of the Reins of Evil; it began to have Life, and a Power of ſtirring, as ſoon as his Deſire began to be earthly: hence the Curſe, or Evil, hid in the Earth, could begin to ſhew itſelf, and got a *Power* of giving forth an *evil* Tree, whoſe Fruit was the Key to the Knowledge of Good and Evil; a Tree which could not have grown, had he willed nothing, but that which God willed in the Creation of him.

He

He was not the Creator of this bad Tree, no more than he was the Creator of the good Trees, that grew in Paradiſe. But as the heavenly *Rectitude* of his Will *kept up* the heavenly Powers of Paradiſe in the Earth; ſo when his Will began to be earthly, it opened a Paſſage for the natural Evil, that was hid in the Earth, to bring forth a Tree in its own Likeneſs. The Earth as now, had then a natural Power of bringing forth a Tree of its own Nature, *viz.* Good and Evil; but Paradiſe was that heavenly Power, which hindered it from bringing forth *ſuch* Productions: but when the *Keeper* of Paradiſe turned a Wiſh from God, and Paradiſe, after a bad Knowledge; then Paradiſe loſt ſome of its Power, and the Curſe, or Evil, hid in the Earth, could give forth a bad Tree. But ſee now the Goodneſs and Compaſſion of God towards this miſtaken Creature; for no ſooner had *Adam*, by the Abuſe of his Power, and Freedom, given *occaſion* to the Birth of this evil Tree, than the God of Love informs him of the *dreadful* Nature of it, *commands* him not to eat of it, aſſuring him, that *Death* was hid in it, that Death to his angelic Life, would be found in the Day that he ſhould eat of it. A plain Proof, if any thing can be plain, that this Tree came not from God, was not according to *his own*

Will

Will and *Purpoſe* towards *Adam*, but from ſuch a natural Power in the Earth, as could not ſhew itſelf, till the *ſtrong Will and Deſire* of *Adam*, beginning to be earthly, worked with *That*, which was the *Evil* hid in the Earth. But pray, THEOPHILUS, do you now ſpeak again.

THEOPH. The ſhort of the Matter then, my Friend, is this: neither *Adam*, nor any other Creature, has at its *Creation*, or Entrance into Life, any *arbitrary Trial* impoſed upon it by God. The *natural* State of every intelligent Creature is its *one only* Trial; and it cannot ſin, but by departing from that Nature, or falling from that State in which it was created. *Adam* was created an human Angel in Paradiſe, and he had no *other Trial* but this, whether he would live in Paradiſe, as an Angel of God, inſenſible of the Life, or the Good and Evil, of this earthly World. This was the Tree of Life, and the Tree of Death, that muſt ſtand before him; and the Neceſſity of his chooſing either the one, or the other, was a Neceſſity founded in his own happy Nature.

The true Account therefore of the Fall of *Adam*, is a *gradual* Declenſion, or Tendency of his Will, from the Life of Paradiſe into the Life of this World, till he was at laſt wholly fallen into it, and ſwallowed up by

by it. The firſt Beginning of his Luſt towards this World, was the firſt Beginning of his Fall, or Departure from the Life of Heaven and Paradiſe; and his eating of the earthly Tree, was the laſt and finiſhing Step of his Entrance into, and under the full Power of this World. This was the true Nature of his Fall. On the other hand, all that we ſee on the Part of God, is a *gradual* Help, adminiſtered by God to this falling Creature, ſuitable to *every Degree* of his falling; till at laſt, in the Fulneſs of his Fall, an *univerſal* Redeemer of him, and his Poſterity, was given by a Second *Adam*, to regenerate again the whole Seed of *Adam* the Firſt.

Thus, the firſt Degree of his Luſt towards this World, had *ſome Stop* put to it, by the taking his *Eve* out of him; that ſo his Deſire into the Life of this World, might be in ſome meaſure leſſened. When his Luſt into this World ſtill went on, and gave Occaſion to the Birth of the evil Tree, a ſuitable Remedy was here given by God; for God laid a *Prohibition* upon it, and declared the *Death* that muſt be received from it. When he was further ſo overcome by his luſting Deſire, as to eat of the Tree that had the Nature of this World in it, and ſo loſt his firſt Life and angelic Clothing, then God, even then

all Goodneſs and Mercy to him, only told him of the *Curſe* and *Miſery* that was opened in Nature; that himſelf and Poſterity muſt be ſweating, labouring Animals, in a fallen World; till their ſickly, ſhameful, naked, new-gotten Bodies, mixed and mouldered in the Corruption of that Earth, whoſe Fruits they had choſen to know, inſtead of thoſe of Paradiſe.

Now all this, is nothing of a *Penalty wrathfully* inflicted by God, but was the *natural State* of *Adam*, as ſoon as his own Luſt had led him out of an heavenly Paradiſe, into the earthly Life of this World. God brings no Miſery upon him; but only *ſhews* the Miſery that he had *opened* in himſelf, by not keeping to the State in which he was created. And no ſooner had God informed this miſerable Pair of the State they had brought upon themſelves, but, in that Moment, his eternal Love *begins a Covenant* of Redemption, that was to begin in them, and in and through them extend itſelf to all their Poſterity. A Beginning of a new Birth, called the *Seed of the Woman*, was, like the firſt Breath of Life, *breathed*, or *inſpoken* again into the Light of their Life; which, as an *Immanuel*, or *God with them*, ſhould be born in all their Poſterity, and be their Power of becoming again ſuch Sons

Sons of God, as ſhould fulfil the firſt Deſigns of the Creation of *Adam*, and fill Heaven again with that Hoſt of Angels which it had loſt. Thus, from the Creation of *Adam*, through all the Degrees of his Fall, to the Myſtery of his Redemption, every Thing tells you, that God is Love. Nay the very Poſſibility of his having ſo great a Fall, gives great Glory to the Goodneſs and Love of God towards him. 1ſt. He was created an Angel, and therefore had the higheſt Perfection of an Angel, which is a *Freedom* of Willing. 2dly, He was created to be the *reſtoring* Angel of this new Creation. Now theſe two Things, which were his higheſt Glory, and greateſt Marks of the Divine Favour, were the only *Poſſibility* of his falling. Had he not had an angelic Freedom of Will, he could not have had a falſe Will; had he not had *all Power* given unto him over this World, he could not have fallen into it; it was this Divine and high Power over it, that opened a Way for his Entrance, or falling into it.——Thus, ACADEMICUS, from this View of Man, we come to the utmoſt Certainty of a threefold Nature or Life in him. 1. He is the Son of a fallen Angel. 2. He is the Son of a Male and Female of this beſtial World. 3. He is a Son of the Lamb of God, and

has a Birth of Heaven again in his Soul. Hence we ſee alſo, that all that we have to fear, to hate, and renounce; all that we have to love, to deſire, and pray for; is *all within* ourſelves. No Man can be miſerable, but by falling a Sacrifice to his own *inward Paſſions* and Tempers; nor any one happy, but by overcoming himſelf. How ridiculous would a Man ſeem to you, who ſhould torment himſelf, becauſe the Land in *America* was not well tilled? Now every Thing that is not within you, that has not its Birth and Growth in your own Life, is at the ſame Diſtance from you, is as foreign to your own Happineſs or Miſery, as an *American* Story. Your Life is all that you have; and nothing is a Part of it, or makes any Alteration in it, but the Good or Evil that is in the Workings of your own Life. Hence you may ſee why our Saviour, who, tho' he had all Wiſdom, and came to be the Light of the World, is yet ſo ſhort in his Inſtructions, and gives ſo ſmall a Number of Doctrines to Mankind, whilſt every moral Teacher writes Volumes upon every ſingle Virtue. It is becauſe he knew what they knew not, that our whole Malady lies in this, that the *Will* of our Mind, the *Luſt* of our Life, is turned into this World; and that nothing can relieve us, or ſet us right,

but

but the *turning* the Will of our Mind, and the Desire of our Hearts to God, and that Heaven which we had lost. And hence it is, that he calls us to nothing, but a *total Denial* of ourselves, and the *Life* of this World; and to a Faith in him, as the Worker of a new Birth and Life in us. Did we but receive his short Instructions with true Faith, and Simplicity of Heart, as the Truth of God, we should not want any one to comment or enlarge upon them. A Traveller that has taken a wrong Road, does not want an Orator to discourse to him on the Nature of Roads, but to be told, in short, which is his right Way. Now this is our Case: it was not a *Number* of Things that brought about our Fall; *Adam* only took up a *wrong Will*; that Will brought him and us into our present State, or *Road of Life*; and therefore our Saviour uses not a Number of Instructions to set us right; he only tells us to renounce the *false Will*, which brought *Adam* into the *Life* of this World, and to take up that Will, which should have kept him in Paradise. Observe now, my Friend, the great Benefit that we have from the foregoing Account of Man's original Perfection, and the Nature of his Fall. It opens the true Ground of our Religion, and the absolute Necessity of it; it

forces us to know, that our whole natural Life is a miſtaken Road, and that Chriſt is alone our true Guide out of it. It teaches us every Reaſon for renouncing ourſelves, and loving the whole Nature of our Redemption, as the greateſt Joy and Deſire of our Hearts. We are not only compelled, as it were, to hunger after it, to run with Eagerneſs into its Arms; but are alſo delivered from all Miſtakes about it; from all the Difficulties and Perplexities, which divided Sects and Churches have brought into it. For, from this View of Things, we ſee, not uncertainly, but with the fulleſt Aſſurance, that our *Will*, and our *Heart*, is all; that nothing elſe either finds or loſes God; and that all our Religion is only the Religion of the Heart. We ſee with open Eyes, that as a *Spirit of Longing* after the Life of this World, made *Adam* and us to be the poor Pilgrims on Earth, that we are; ſo the *Spirit of Prayer*, or the longing Deſire of the Heart after Chriſt, and God, and Heaven, breaks all our Bonds aſunder, caſts all our Cords from us, and raiſes us out of the Miſeries of Time, into the Riches of Eternity. Thus ſeeing and knowing our firſt and our preſent State, every Thing calls us to Prayer; and the Deſire of our Heart becomes the Spirit of Prayer. And when the Spirit of Prayer

Prayer is born in us, then Prayer is no longer conſidered, as only the Buſineſs of this or that Hour, but is the continual Panting or Breathing of the Heart after God. Its Petitions are not picked out of Manuals of Devotion; it loves its own Language; it ſpeaks moſt when it ſays leaſt. If you aſk what its Words are, they are *Spirit*, they are *Life*, they are *Love*, that unite with God.

ACAD. I apprehend, Sir, that what you here ſay of the Spirit of Prayer, will be taken by ſome People for a Cenſure upon *Hours* and *Forms* of Prayer; though I know you have no ſuch Meaning.

RUST. Pray let me ſpeak again to ACADEMICUS: his Learning ſeems to be always upon the Watch, to find out ſome Excuſe for not receiving the whole Truth. Does not THEOPHILUS here ſpeak of the *Spirit of Prayer*, as a *State* of the Heart, which is become the *governing* Principle of the Soul's Life? And if it is a living State of the Heart, muſt it not have its Life in itſelf, independent of every outward Time and Occaſion? And yet muſt it not, at the ſame Time, be that alone which diſpoſes and fits the Heart to rejoice and delight in Hours, and Times, and Occaſions of Prayer? Suppoſe he had ſaid, that *Honeſty* is an *in-*

ward living Principle of the Heart, a Rectitude of the Mind, that has all its Life and Strength *within* itſelf: could this be thought to cenſure all Times and Occaſions of performing outward Acts of Honeſty? Now the *Spirit* of Prayer differs from all outward Acts and Forms of Prayer, juſt as the *Honeſty of the Heart*, or a living Rectitude of Mind, differs from outward and occaſional Acts of Honeſty. And yet ſhould a Man overlook, or diſregard Times and Occaſions of outward Acts of Honeſty, on Pretence that true Honeſty was an inward living Principle of the Heart; who would not ſee, that ſuch a one had as little of the inward Spirit, as of the outward Acts of Honeſty? St. *John* ſaith, *If any Man hath this World's Goods, and ſeeth his Brother hath need, and ſhutteth up his Bowels of Compaſſion to him, How dwelleth the Love of God in him?* Juſt ſo, and with the ſame Truth, it may be ſaid, if a Man overlooketh, neglecteth, or refuſeth, Times and Hours of Prayer, *how dwelleth the Spirit of Prayer* in him? And yet, its own Life and Spirit is vaſtly ſuperior to, independent on, and ſtays for no particular Hours, or Forms of Words. And in this Senſe it is truly ſaid, that it has its own Language, that it wants not to pick Words out of Manuals of Devotion, but is always

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ſpeaking forth Spirit and Life, and Love towards God. But pray, THEOPHILUS, do you go on, as you intended.

THEOPH. I ſhall only add, before we paſs on to another Point, that, from what has been ſaid of the firſt State and Fall of Man, it plainly follows, that the *Sin* of all Sins, or the *Hereſy* of all Hereſies, is a *worldly Spirit*. We are apt to conſider this Temper only as an Infirmity, or pardonable Failure; but it is indeed the great *Apoſtaſy* from God, and the Divine Life. It is not a ſingle Sin, but the whole Nature of all Sin, that leaves no Poſſibility of coming out of our fallen State, till it be totally renounced with all the Strength of our Hearts. Every Sin, be it of what kind it will, is only a Branch of the worldly Spirit that lives in us. *There is but one that is good*, ſaith our Lord, *and that is God*. In the ſame Strictneſs of Expreſſion it muſt be ſaid, there is but *one Life* that is good, and that is the Life of God and Heaven. Depart in the leaſt Degree from the Goodneſs of God, and you depart into Evil; becauſe nothing is Good but his Goodneſs.

Chooſe any Life, but the Life of God and Heaven, and you chooſe Death; for Death is nothing elſe but the Loſs of the Life of God. The Creatures of this World have but

but *one Life*, and that is the Life of this World; this is their *one Life*, and *one Good*. Eternal Beings have but *one Life*, and *one Good*; and that is the Life of God. The Spirit of the Soul is in itſelf nothing elſe but a Spirit breathed forth from the Life of God; and for this only End, that the Life of God, the Nature of God, the Working of God, the Tempers of God, might be manifeſted in it. God could not create Man to have a Will of his own, and a Life of his own, different from the Life and Will that is in himſelf; this is more impoſſible than for a good Tree to bring forth corrupt Fruit. God can only delight in his own Life, his own Goodneſs, and his own Perfections; and therefore cannot love, or delight, or dwell, in any Creatures, but where his own Goodneſs and Perfections are to be found. Like can only unite with Like, Heaven with Heaven, and Hell with Hell; and therefore the Life of God muſt be the Life of the Soul, before the Soul can unite with God. Hence it is, that all the Religion of fallen Man, all the Methods of our Redemption, have only this *one End*, to take from us that *ſtrange* and *earthly* Life we have gotten by the Fall, and to kindle again the Life of God and Heaven in our Souls. Not to deliver us from that groſs

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and ſordid Vice called *Covetouſneſs*, which Heathens can condemn, but to take the *whole Spirit* of this World entirely from us, and that for this neceſſary Reaſon; becauſe *All that is in the World, the Luſt of the Fleſh, the Luſt of the Eye, and the Pride of Life, is not of the Father*; that is, is not that Life, or Spirit of Life, which we had from God by our Creation; *but is of this World*; is brought into us by our Fall from God into the Life of this World. And therefore a wordly Spirit is not to be conſidered, as a ſingle Sin, or as ſomething that may conſiſt with ſome real Degrees of Chriſtian Goodneſs; but as a State of *real Death* to the Kingdom and Life of God in our Souls. Management, Prudence, or an artful Trimming betwixt God and Mammon, are here all in vain; it is not only the Groſſneſs of an outward, viſible, worldly Behaviour, but the *Spirit*, the *Prudence*, the *Subtlety*, the *Wiſdom*, of this World, that is our *Separation* from the Life of God.

Hold this therefore, ACADEMICUS, as a certain Truth, that the *Hereſy* of all Hereſies is a *wordly Spirit*. It is the whole Nature and Miſery of our Fall; it keeps up the Death of our Souls; and, ſo long as it laſts, makes it impoſſible for us to be born again from above. It is the greateſt Blindneſs and Darkneſs

Darkneſs of our Nature, and keeps us in the groſſeſt Ignorance both of Heaven and Hell: for tho' they are both of them within us, yet we feel neither the one, nor the other, ſo long as the Spirit of this World reigns in us. Light, and Truth, and the Goſpel, ſo far as they concern Eternity, are all empty Sounds to the worldly Spirit. His own Good, and his own Evil, govern all his Hopes and Fears; and therefore he can have no Religion, or be farther concerned in it, than ſo far as it can be made ſerviceable to the Life of this World. *Publicans* and *Harlots* are all born of the Spirit of this World; but its higheſt Birth, are the *Scribes*, the *Phariſees*, and *Hypocrites*, who turn Godlineſs into Gain, and ſerve God for the Sake of Mammon; theſe live, and move, and have their Being, in and from the Spirit of this World.——Of all Things therefore, my Friend, deteſt the Spirit of this World, or there is no Help: you muſt live and die an *utter Stranger* to all that is divine and heavenly; you will go out of the World in the ſame Poverty and Death to the Divine Life, in which you entered into it; for a worldly earthly Spirit can know nothing of God; it can know nothing, feel nothing, taſte nothing, delight in nothing, but with earthly Senſes, and after an earthly Manner.

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The natural Man, ſaith the Apoſtle, *receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God, they are Fooliſhneſs unto him. He cannot know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned*; that is, they can only be diſcerned by *that Spirit*, which he hath not. Now the true *Ground* and *Reaſon* of this, and the abſolute Impoſſibility for the natural Man, how polite, and learned, and acute ſoever he be, is this; it is becauſe all *real* Knowledge is *Life*, or a living *Senſibility* of the Thing that is known. There is no Light in the Mind, but what is the Light of *Life*; ſo far as our Life reaches, ſo far we underſtand, and *feel*, and know, and no farther. All after this, is only the Play of our Imagination, amuſing itſelf with the *dead Pictures* of its own Ideas. Now this is all that the natural Man, who hath not the Life of God in him, can poſſibly do with the Things of God. He can only contemplate them, as Things *foreign* to himſelf; as ſo many *dead Ideas*, that he receives from Books, or Hearſay; and ſo can learnedly diſpute and quarrel about them, and laugh at thoſe as Enthuſiaſts, who have a living Senſibility of them. He is only the worſe for his *hearſay*, *dead Ideas* of Divine Truths; they become a bad Nouriſhment of all his natural Tempers: he is proud of his Ability to diſcourſe about them, and

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loſes all Humility, all Love of God and Man, through a vain and haughty Contention for them. His *Zeal* for Religion is Envy and Wrath, his *Orthodoxy* is Pride and Obſtinacy, his *Love* of the Truth is Hatred and Ill-will to thoſe who dare to diſſent from him. This is the conſtant Effect of the Religion of the natural Man, who is under the Dominion of the Spirit of this World. He cannot know more of Religion, nor make a better Uſe of his Knowledge, than this comes to; and all for this plain Reaſon, becauſe he ſtands at the *ſame Diſtance* from a *living Senſibility* of the Truth, as the Man that is born blind, does from a *living Senſibility* of Light. Light muſt firſt be the *Birth* of his own Life, before he can enter into a *real* Knowledge of it. Yet ſo ignorant is the natural Man with all his learned Acuteneſs, that he does not ſo much as know, that there is, and muſt be, this great *Difference* between real Knowledge, and dead Ideas of Things; and that a Man cannot know any Thing, any further than as his *own Life* opens the Knowledge of it in himſelf.

The Meaſure of our Life is the Meaſure of our Knowledge; and as the Spirit of our Life worketh, ſo the Spirit of our Underſtanding conceiveth. If our Will worketh with God, tho' our natural Capacity be ever

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ſo mean and narrow, we get a real Knowledge of God, and heavenly Truths; for every Thing muſt feel that, in which it lives.

But if our Will worketh with Satan, and the Spirit of this World, let our Parts be ever ſo bright, our Imaginations ever ſo ſoaring; yet all our living Knowledge, or real Senſibility, can go no higher or deeper, than the *Myſteries* of Iniquity, and the *Luſts* of Fleſh and Blood. For where our Life is, there, and there only, is our Underſtanding, and that for this plain Reaſon; becauſe as Life is the *Beginning* of all Senſibility, ſo it is and muſt be the *Bounds* of it; and no Senſibility can go any further than the Life goes, or have any other *Manner* of Knowledge, than as the Manner of its Life is. If you aſk what *Life* is, or what is to be underſtood by it? it is in itſelf nothing elſe but a *working Will*; and no Life could be either good or evil, but for this Reaſon, becauſe it is a *working Will:* every Life, from the higheſt Angel to the loweſt Animal, conſiſts in a working Will; and therefore as the Will worketh, as that is with which it uniteth, ſo hath every Creature its *Degree*, and *Kind*, and *Manner* of Life; and conſequently as the Will of its Life worketh, ſo it hath its *Degree*, and *Kind*,

Kind, and *Manner* of Conceiving and Underſtanding, of Liking and Diſliking. For nothing feels, or taſtes, or underſtands, or likes, or diſlikes, but the Life that is in us. The Spirit that leads our Life, is the Spirit that forms our Underſtanding. The Mind is our Eye, and all the Faculties of the Mind ſee every Thing according to the State the Mind is in. If *ſelfiſh Pride* is the Spirit of our Life, every Thing is only ſeen, and felt, and known, through this Glaſs. Every Thing is dark, ſenſeleſs, and abſurd, to the proud Man, but that which brings Food to this Spirit. He underſtands nothing, he feels nothing, he taſtes nothing, but as his Pride is made *ſenſible* of it, or capable of being *affected* with it. His *working Will*, which is the Life of his Soul, liveth and worketh only in the Element of Pride; and therefore what ſuits his Pride, is his *only Good*; and what contradicts his Pride, is *all* the Evil that he can feel or know. His Wit, his Parts, his Learning, his Advancement, his Friends, his Admirers, his Succeſſes, his Conqueſts, all theſe are the *only* God and Heaven, that he has any *living* Senſibility of. He can talk, indeed, of a Scripture-God, a Scripture-Chriſt, and Heaven; but theſe are only the ornamental Furniture of his Brain, whilſt Pride is the God of his Heart. We

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are told, that *God reſiſteth the Proud, and giveth Grace to the Humble.* This is not to be underſtood, as if God, by an *arbitrary Will*, only choſe to deal thus with the proud and humble Man: but the true Ground is this; the *Reſiſtance* is on the Part of Man. Pride reſiſteth God, it rejecteth him, it turneth from him, and chooſeth to worſhip and adore ſomething elſe inſtead of him; whereas Humility leaveth all for God, falls down before him, and opens all the Doors of the Heart for his Entrance into it. This is the only Senſe, in which God reſiſteth the Proud, and giveth Grace to the Humble. And thus it is in the true Ground and Reaſon of every Good and Evil that riſes up in us; we have neither Good nor Evil, but as it is the *natural* Effect of the *Workings* of our own Will, either with, or againſt God; and God only interpoſes with his Threatnings and Inſtructions, to *direct* us to a right Uſe of our Wills, that we may not blindly work ourſelves into Death, inſtead of Life. But take now another Inſtance like that already mentioned. Look at a Man whoſe *working Will* is under the Power of *Wrath*. He ſees, and hears, and feels, and underſtands, and talks wholly from the *Light* and *Senſe* of Wrath. All his Faculties are only ſo many Faculties of

Wrath; and he knows of no Senſe or Reaſon, but that which his enlightened Wrath diſcovers to him. I have appealed, ACADEMICUS, to theſe Inſtances, only to illuſtrate and confirm that great Truth, which I before aſſerted; namely, that the *working of the Will*, or the State of our Life, governs the State of our Mind, and forms the *Degree* and *Manner* of our Underſtanding and Knowledge; and that as the *Fire* of our Life burns, ſo is the Light of our Life kindled. And all this only to ſhew you the utter *Impoſſibility* of *knowing* God, and Divine Truths, till your *Life* is Divine, and wholly dead to the Life and Spirit of this World; ſince our Light and Knowledge can be no better, or higher, than the State of our Life and Heart is. Tell me now, do you feel the Truth of all this? I ſay, feel; becauſe no Truth is poſſeſſed, till you have a feeling and living Senſibility of it.

ACAD. O! Sir, you have touched every String of my Heart: and I now wiſh, with the *Pſalmiſt*, that I had the Wings of a Dove, that I might flee away, and be at Reſt; flee away from the Spirit of this World, to be at Reſt in the ſweet Tranquillity of a Life born again of God. You know, Sir, that in the Morning you told me of a certain *firſt Step*, that

that of all Neceſſity muſt be the *Beginning* of a ſpiritual Life; you gave me till To-morrow to ſpeak my Mind and Reſolution about it. But you have now extorted my Anſwer from me, I cannot ſtay a Moment longer: with all the Strength that I have, I turn from every Thing that is not God, and his holy Will; with all the Deſire, Delight, and Longing of my Heart, I give up myſelf wholly to the Life, Light, and Holy Spirit of God; pleaſed with nothing in this World, but as it gives Time, and Place, and Occaſions, of doing and being *that*, which my heavenly Father would have me to do, and be; ſeeking for no Happineſs from this earthly fallen Life, but that of *overcoming* all its Spirit and Tempers. But I believe, THEOPHILUS, that you had ſomething further to ſay.

THEOPH. Indeed, ACADEMICUS, there is hardly any knowing, when one has ſaid enough of the evil Effects of a *worldly Spirit*. It is the Canker that eateth up all the Fruits of our good Tempers; it leaves no Degree of Goodneſs in them, but transforms all that we are, or do, into its own earthly Nature. The *Philoſophers* of old, began all their Virtue in a total Renunciation of the Spirit of this World. They ſaw with the Eyes of Heaven, that Darkneſs was

not more contrary to Light, than the Wiſdom of this World was contrary to the Spirit of Virtue; therefore they allowed of no Progreſs in Virtue, but ſo far as a Man had overcome himſelf, and the Spirit of this World.

This gave a Divine Solidity to all their Inſtructions, and proved them to be Maſters of true Wiſdom. But the Doctrine of the Croſs of Chriſt, the laſt, the higheſt, the finiſhing Stroke given to the Spirit of this World, that ſpeaks more in *one Word* than all the Philoſophy of voluminous Writers, is yet profeſſed by thoſe, who are in more Friendſhip with the World, than was allowed to the Diſciples of *Pythagoras*, *Socrates*, *Plato*, or *Epictetus*.

Nay, if thoſe antient Sages were to ſtart up amongſt us with their Divine Wiſdom, they would bid fair to be treated by the Sons of the Goſpel, if not by ſome Fathers of the Church, as dreaming Enthuſiaſts.

But, ACADEMICUS, this is a ſtanding Truth, the World can only love its own, and Wiſdom can only be juſtified of her Children. The Heaven-born *Epictetus* told one of his Scholars, that *then* he might *firſt* look upon himſelf, as having made *ſome true* Proficiency in Virtue, when the World took him for a *Fool*; an Oracle like that, which

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ſaid, *The Wiſdom of this World is Fooliſhneſs with God.*

If you was to aſk me, what is the Apoſtaſy of theſe laſt Times, or whence is all the Degeneracy of the preſent Chriſtian Church, I ſhould place it all in a *worldly Spirit*. If here you ſee open Wickedneſs, there only Forms of Godlineſs; if here ſuperficial Holineſs, political Piety, crafty Prudence, there haughty Sanctity, partial Zeal, envious Orthodoxy; if almoſt every-where you ſee a *Jewiſh* Blindneſs and Hardneſs of Heart, and the Church trading with the Goſpel, as viſibly, as the old *Jews* bought and ſold Beaſts in their Temple; all this is only ſo many Forms and proper Fruits of the worldly Spirit. This is the great *Net*, with which the Devil becomes a Fiſher of Men; and be aſſured of this, my Friend, that every Son of Man is in this *Net*, till, through and by the Spirit of Chriſt, he breaks out of it.

I ſay, the *Spirit* of Chriſt; for nothing elſe can deliver him from it. Truſt now to any Kind, or Form of religious Obſervances, to any Number of the moſt plauſible Virtues, to any Kinds of Learning, or Efforts of human Prudence, and then I will tell you what your Caſe will be; you will overcome *one* Temper of the World, *only* and *merely* by cleaving to another. For nothing leaves the

World, nothing renounces it, nothing can poſſibly overcome it, but ſingly and ſolely the Spirit of Chriſt. Hence it is, that many learned Men, with all the rich Furniture of their Brain, live and die Slaves to the Spirit of this World; and can only differ from groſs Worldlings, as the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* differed from *Publicans* and *Sinners:* it is becauſe the Spirit of Chriſt, is not the *one only* Thing that is the *Deſire* of their Hearts; and therefore their Learning only works in, and with the Spirit of this World, and becomes itſelf, no ſmall Part of the *Vanity of Vanities.* Would you further know, ACADEMICUS, the evil Nature and Effects of a worldly Spirit, you need only look at the bleſſed Power, and Effects of the *Spirit of Prayer:* for the one goes downwards with the ſame Strength, as the other goes upwards; the one betroths and weds you to an earthly Nature, with the ſame Certainty, as the other eſpouſes and unites you to Chriſt, and God, and Heaven. The Spirit of Prayer, is a *preſſing forth* of the Soul out of this earthly Life; it is a ſtretching with all its Deſire after the Life of God; it is a leaving, as far as it can, all its *own Spirit,* to receive a Spirit from above, to be one Life, one Love, one Spirit with Chriſt in God. This Prayer, which is an

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emptying itſelf of all its own Luſts and natural Tempers, and an opening itſelf for the Light and Love of God to enter into it, is the Prayer in *the Name of Chriſt*, to which nothing is denied. For the Love which God bears to the Soul, his eternal, never-ceaſing Deſire to enter into it, to dwell in it, and open the Birth of his Holy Word and Spirit in it, ſtays no longer, than till the Door of the Heart opens for him. For nothing does, or can keep God out of the Soul, or hinder his holy Union with it, but the *Deſire* of the Heart turned from him. And the Reaſon of it is this; it is becauſe the *Life* of the Soul is in itſelf nothing elſe but a *working Will*; and therefore whereever the Will worketh or goeth, there, and there only, the Soul liveth, whether it be in God, or the Creature.

Whatever it deſireth, that is the *Fewel* of its Fire; and as its Fewel is, ſo is the Flame of its Life. A Will, given up to earthly Goods, is at Graſs with *Nebuchadnezzar*, and has one Life with the Beaſts of the Field; for earthly Deſires keep up the *ſame Life* in a Man and an Ox. For the one only Reaſon, why the Animals of this World have no Senſe or Knowledge of God, is this; it is becauſe they cannot form any other than earthly Deſires, and ſo can only have an

earthly Life. When therefore a Man wholly turneth his working Will to earthly Desires, he dies to the Excellency of his natural State, and may be said only to live, and move, and have his Being, in the Life of this World, as the Beasts have. Earthly Food, *&c.* only desired and used for the Support of the earthly Body, is suitable to Man's present Condition, and the Order of Nature: but when the Desire, the Delight, and Longing of the Soul is set upon earthly Things, then the Humanity is degraded, is fallen from God; and the Life of the Soul is made as *earthly* and *bestial*, as the Life of the Body: for the Creature can be neither higher nor lower, neither better nor worse, than as the Will worketh: for you are to observe, that the Will hath a divine and *magic* Power; what it desireth, that it taketh, and of that it *eateth* and *liveth*. Where-ever, and in whatever, the *working* Will chooseth to *dwell* and *delight*, that becometh the Soul's *Food*, its *Condition*, its *Body*, its *Cloathing*, and *Habitation*: for all these are the true and certain Effects and Powers of the working Will.

Nothing doth, or can go with a Man into Heaven, nothing followeth him into Hell, but *that* in which the Will dwelt, with which it was fed, nourished, and cloathed,

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in this Life. And this is to be noted well, that Death can make no Alteration of this State of the Will; it only takes off the outward, worldly Covering of Flesh and Blood, and forces the Soul to see, and feel, and know, what a Life, what a State, *Food*, *Body*, and *Habitation*, its own working Will has brought forth for it. O Academicus, stop a while, and let your Hearing be turned into Feeling. Tell me, is there any Thing in Life that deserves a Thought, but how to keep this *Working* of our Will in a right State; and to get that *Purity* of Heart, which alone can see, and know, and find, and possess God? Is there any Thing so frightful as this worldly Spirit, which turns the Soul from God, makes it a House of Darkness, and feeds it with the Food of Time, at the Expence of the Riches of Eternity?

On the other hand, what can be so desirable a Good as the *Spirit of Prayer*, which empties the Soul of all its own Evil; separates Death and Darkness from it; leaves *Self*, *Time*, and the *World*; and becomes one Life, one Light, one Love, one Spirit, with Christ, and God, and Heaven?

Think, my Friends, of these Things, with something more than Thoughts; let your hungry Souls eat of the Nourishment of them

them as the Bread of Heaven; and desire only to live, that with all the *Working* of your Wills, and the *whole Spirit* of your Minds, you may live and die united to God. And thus let this Conversation end, till God gives us another Meeting.

The End of the Second DIALOGUE.

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THIRD DIALOGUE.

RUST. I Have brought again with me, Gentlemen, my ſilent Friend, HUMANUS, and upon the ſame Condition of being ſilent ſtill. But though his Silence is the ſame, yet he is quite altered. For theſe twenty Years I have known him to be of an even, chearful Temper, full of Good-nature, and even quite calm and diſpaſſionate in his Attacks upon Chriſtianity; never provoked by what was ſaid either againſt his Infidelity, or in Defence of the Goſpel. He uſed to boaſt of his being free from thoſe four Paſſions and Reſentments, which, he ſaid, were ſo eaſy to be ſeen, in many or moſt Defenders of the Goſpel-Meekneſs. But now he is moroſe, peeviſh, and full of Chagrin; and ſeems to be as uneaſy with himſelf, as with every Body elſe: whatever he ſays, is raſh, ſatirical, and wrathful. I tell him, but he will not own it, that his Caſe is this: the Truth has touched him; but it is only ſo far, as to be his *Tormentor*. It is only as welcome to him as a *Thief*, that has taken from him all his Riches, Goods, and Armour, wherein he truſted. The Chriſtianity

Chriſtianity he uſed to oppoſe, is vaniſhed; and therefore all the Weapons he had againſt it, are dropt out of his Hands. It now appears to ſtand upon another Ground, to have a deeper Bottom, and better Nature, than what he imagined; and therefore he, and his Scheme of Infidelity, are quite diſconcerted. But though his Arguments have thus loſt all their Strength, yet his *Heart* is left in the State it was; it ſtands in the ſame Oppoſition to Chriſtianity as it did before, and yet without any Ideas of his Brain to ſupport it. And this is the true Ground of his preſent, uneaſy, peeviſh State of Mind. He has nothing now to ſubſiſt upon, but the reſolute *Hardneſs* of his Heart, his *Pride* and *Obſtinacy*. Theſe he cannot give up by the Force of his Reaſon; his Heart cannot bear the Thoughts of ſuch a Sacrifice; and yet he feels and knows, that he has no Strength left, but in a ſettled Hardneſs, Pride, and Obſtinacy, to continue as he is.—Theſe, I own, are ſevere and hard Words: but, hard as they are, I am ſure HUMANUS knows, that they proceed from the Softneſs and Affection of my Heart towards him; from a compaſſionate Zeal to ſhew him where his Malady lies, and the Neceſſity of overcoming himſelf, before he can have the Bleſſing of Light, and Truth,

and

and Peace. Though it is with ſome Reluctance, yet I have choſen thus to make my Neighbour known both to himſelf, and to you, that you may ſpeak of ſuch Matters as may give the beſt Relief to the State he is in.

THEOPH. Indeed, RUSTICUS, I much approve of the Spirit you have here ſhewn with regard to your Friend, and hope he will take in good Part all that you have ſaid. As for me, I embrace him with the utmoſt Tenderneſs of Affection. I feel and compaſſionate the trying State of his Heart; and have only this one Wiſh, that I could pour the heavenly Water of Meekneſs, and the Oil of Divine Love, into it. Let us force him to know, that we are the Meſſengers of Divine Love to him; that we ſeek not ourſelves, nor our own Victory, but to make him victorious over his own Evil, and become poſſeſſed of a new Life in God. His Trial is the greateſt and hardeſt that belongs to human Nature; and yet it is abſolutely neceſſary to be undergone.

Nature muſt become a Torment and Burden to itſelf, before it can willingly give itſelf up to that Death, through which alone it can paſs into Life. There is no true and real *Converſion*, whether it be from Infidelity, or any other Life of Sin, till a Man comes to know,

know, and feel, that nothing leſs than his *whole* Nature is to be parted with, and yet finds in himſelf no *Poſſibility* of doing it. This is the Inability that can bring us at laſt to ſay, with the Apoſtle, *When I am weak, then am I ſtrong*. This is the Diſtreſs that ſtands near to the Gate of Life; this is the Deſpair by which we loſe all our own Life, to find a new Life in God. For here, in this Place it is, that *Faith*, and *Hope*, and true Seeking to God and Chriſt, are born.—But till all is Deſpair in ourſelves, till all is loſt that we had any Truſt in as our own; till then, Faith and Hope, and turning to God in Prayer, are only Things learnt and practiſed by *Rule* and *Method*; but they are not born in us, are not *living* Qualities of the new Birth, till we have done feeling any Truſt or Confidence in ourſelves. Happy therefore is it for your Friend HUMANUS, that he is come thus far, that every Thing is taken from him on which he truſted, and found Content in himſelf. In this State, one *Sigh* or *Look*, or the leaſt *Turning* of his Heart to God for Help, would be the Beginning of his Salvation. Let us therefore try to improve this happy Moment to him, not ſo much by Arguments of Reaſon, as by the Effuſions of that Divine Love which overflow all Nature and Creature.

For

For HUMANUS, tho' hitherto without Chriſt, is ſtill within the Reach of Divine Love: he belongs to God; God created him for himſelf, to be an Habitation of his own Life, Light, and Holy Spirit; and God has brought him and us together, that the loſt Sheep may be found, and brought back to its heavenly Shepherd.

O HUMANUS, Love is my *Bait*; you muſt be caught by it; it will put its Hook into your Heart, and force you to know, that of all ſtrong Things, nothing is ſo ſtrong, ſo irreſiſtible, as Divine Love.

It brought forth all the Creation; it kindles all the Life of Heaven; it is the Song of all the Angels of God. It has redeemed all the World; it ſeeks for every Sinner upon Earth; it embraces all the Enemies of God; and, from the Beginning to the End of Time, the one Work of Providence, is the one Work of Love.

Moſes and the Prophets, Chriſt and his Apoſtles, were all of them Meſſengers of Divine Love. They came to kindle a Fire on Earth, and that Fire was the Love which burns in Heaven. Aſk what God is? His Name is Love; he is the Good, the Perfection, the Peace, the Joy, the Glory, and Bleſſing, of every Life. Aſk what Chriſt is? He is the *univerſal Remedy* of all Evil broken forth

forth in Nature and Creature; he is the *Deſtruction* of Miſery, Sin, Darkneſs, Death, and Hell. He is the *Reſurrection and Life* of all fallen Nature. He is the unwearied Compaſſion, the long-ſuffering Pity, the never-ceaſing Mercifulneſs of God, to every Want and Infirmity of human Nature.

He is the Breathing forth of the Heart, Life, and Spirit of God, into all the dead Race of *Adam*. He is the Seeker, the Finder, the Reſtorer, of all that was loſt and dead to the Life of God. He is the Love, that, from *Cain* to the End of Time, prays for all its Murderers; the Love that willingly ſuffers and dies among Thieves, that Thieves may have a Life with him in Paradiſe; the Love that viſits Publicans, Harlots, and Sinners, that wants and ſeeks to forgive, where moſt is to be forgiven.

O, my Friends, let us ſurround and encompaſs HUMANUS with theſe Flames of Love, till he cannot make his Eſcape from them, but muſt become a willing Victim to their Power. For the univerſal God is univerſal Love; all is Love, but that which is helliſh and earthly. All Religion is the Spirit of Love; all its Gifts and Graces are the Gifts and Graces of Love; it has no Breath, no Life, but the Life of Love. Nothing exalts, nothing purifies, but the

Fire

Fire of Love; nothing changes Death into Life, Earth into Heaven, Men into Angels, but Love alone. Love breathes the *Spirit* of God; its Words and Works are the *Inſpiration* of God. It ſpeaketh not of itſelf, but the *Word*, the Eternal Word of God ſpeaketh in it; for all that Love ſpeaketh, that God ſpeaketh, becauſe God is Love. Love is Heaven revealed in the Soul; it is Light, and Truth; it is infallible; it has no Errors, for all Errors are the Want of Love. Love has no more of Pride, than Light has of Darkneſs; it ſtands and bears all its Fruits from a Depth, and Root of Humility. Love is of no Sect or Party; it neither makes, nor admits of any Bounds; you may as eaſily incloſe the Light, or ſhut up the Air of the World into one Place, as confine Love to a Sect or Party. It lives in the *Liberty*, the *Univerſality*, the *Impartiality*, of Heaven. It believes in one, holy, catholic God, the God of all Spirits; it unites and joins with the catholic Spirit of the one God, who unites with all that is good, and is meek, patient, well-wiſhing, and long-ſuffering, over all the Evil that is in Nature and Creature. Love, like the Spirit of God, rideth upon the Wings of the Wind; and is in Union and Communion with all the Saints that are in Heaven and on Earth.

Love is quite pure; it hath no By-ends; it ſeeks not its own; it has but *one Will*, and that is, to give itſelf into every Thing, and overcome all Evil with Good. Laſtly, Love is the *Chriſt* of God; it cometh down from Heaven; it regenerateth the Soul from above; it blotteth out all Tranſgreſſions; it taketh from Death its Sting, from the Devil his Power, and from the Serpent his Poiſon. It healeth all the Infirmities of our earthly Birth; it gives Eyes to the Blind, Ears to the Deaf, and makes the Dumb to ſpeak; it cleanſes the Lepers, and caſts out Devils, and puts Man in Paradiſe before he dies. It liveth wholly to the Will of him, of whom it is born; its Meat and Drink is, to do the Will of God. It is the Reſurrection and Life of every divine Virtue, a fruitful Mother of true Humility, boundleſs Benevolence, unwearied Patience, and Bowels of Compaſſion. This, RUSTICUS, is the Chriſt, the Salvation, the Religion of divine Love, the true Church of God, where the Life of God is found, and lived, and to which your Friend HUMANUS is called by us. We direct him to nothing but the inward Life of Chriſt, to the Working of the Holy Spirit of God, which alone can deliver him from the Evil that is in his own Nature,

Nature, and give him a Power to become a Son of God.

Rust. My Neighbour has infinite Reaſon to thank you, for this lovely Draught you have given of the Spirit of Religion; he cannot avoid being affected with it. But pray let us now hear, how we are to enter into this Religion of divine Love, or rather what God has done to introduce us into it, and make us Partakers again of his divine Nature.

Theoph. The firſt Work, or Beginning of this redeeming Love of God, is in that *Immanuel*, or God with us, given to the firſt *Adam*, as the *Seed of the Woman*, which in him, and all his Poſterity, ſhould bruiſe the Head, and overcome the Life, of the Serpent in our fallen Nature. This is Love indeed, becauſe it is univerſal, and reaches every Branch of the human Tree, from the firſt to the laſt Man, that grows from it. Miſerably as Mankind are divided, and all at War with one another, every one *appropriating* God to themſelves, yet they all have but one God, who is the Spirit of all, the Life of all, and the Lover of all. Men may divide themſelves, to have God to themſelves; they may hate and perſecute one another for God's ſake; but this is a bleſſed Truth, that neither the Hater, nor the Hated, can be divided from the one, holy,

catholic God, who with an unalterable Meekneſs, Sweetneſs, Patience, and Goodwill towards all, waits for all, calls them all, redeems them all, and comprehends all in the out-ſtretched Arms of his catholic Love. Aſk not therefore how we ſhall enter into this Religion of Love and Salvation; for it is itſelf entered into us, it has taken Poſſeſſion of us from the Beginning. It is *Immanuel* in every human Soul; it lies as a Treaſure of Heaven and Eternity in us; it cannot be divided from us by the Power of Man; we cannot loſe it ourſelves; it will never leave us, nor forſake us, till with our laſt Breath we die in the Refuſal of it. This is the open Gate of our Redemption; we have not far to go to find it. It is every Man's own Treaſure; it is a Root of Heaven, a Seed of God, ſown into our Souls by the *Word* of God; and, like a ſmall Grain of Muſtard-ſeed, has a Power of growing to be a Tree of Life. Here, my Friend, you ſhould, once for all, mark and obſerve, *where* and *what* the true Nature of Religion is; for here it is plainly ſhewn you, that its *Place* is within; its Work and Effect is *within*; its Glory, its Life, its Perfection, is all *within*; it is merely and ſolely the raiſing a new Life, a new Love, and a new Birth, in the inward Spirit of our Hearts.

Religion

Religion (which is ſolely to reſtore Man to his firſt and right State in God) had its Beginning, and firſt Power, from the *Seed of the Woman*, the Treader on the Serpent's Head; and therefore all its Progreſs, from its Beginning to its laſt finiſhed Work, is, and can be nothing elſe, but the growing Power and Victory of the *Seed of the Woman*, over all the Evil brought by the Serpent into human Nature. For the Seed of the Woman is the Spirit, and Power, and Life of God, given or breathed again into Man, to be the Raiſer and Redeemer of that firſt Life, which he had loſt. This was the *ſpiritual* Nature of Religion in its firſt Beginning, and this alone is its *whole Nature* to the End of Time; it is nothing elſe, but the Power, and Life, and Spirit of God, as *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Spirit*, working, creating, and reviving Life in the fallen Soul, and driving all its Evil out of it. This is the true Rock, on which the Church of Chriſt is built; this is the *one Church* out of which there is no Salvation, and againſt which the Gates of Hell can never prevail.

Here therefore we are come to this firm Concluſion, that let Religion have ever ſo many *Shapes*, *Forms*, or *Reformations*, it is no true divine *Service*, no proper *Worſhip* of God, has no Good in it, can do no Good to

Man, can remove no Evil out of him, raiſe no divine Life in him, but ſo far as it *ſerves*, *worſhips*, *conforms*, and *gives* itſelf up to this *Operation* of the holy, triune God, as living and dwelling in the Soul. Keep cloſe to this Idea of Religion, as an inward, ſpiritual Life in the Soul; obſerve all its Works within you, the Death and Life that are found there; ſeek for no Good, no Comfort, but in the inward Awakening of all that is holy and heavenly in your Heart; and then, ſo much as you have of this inward Religion, ſo much you have of a real Salvation. For Salvation is only a Victory over Nature: ſo far as you reſiſt and renounce your own vain, ſelfiſh, and earthly Nature, ſo far as you overcome all your own natural Tempers of the old Man, ſo far God enters into you, lives, and operates in you; he is in you the Light, the Life, and the Spirit, of your Soul; and you are in him that new Creature, that worſhips him in Spirit, and in Truth. For divine Worſhip or Service is, and can be only performed by being *like-minded* with Chriſt; nothing worſhips God, but the Spirit of Chriſt his beloved Son, in whom he is well pleaſed. This is as true, as that *no Man hath known the Father, but the Son, and he to whom the Son revealeth him.* Look now at any Thing as Religion, or divine Service,

Service, but a ſtrict, unerring Conformity to the Life and Spirit of Chriſt; and then, though every Day was full of Burnt-offerings and Sacrifices, yet you would be only like thoſe Religioniſts, who *drew near to God with their Lips, but their Hearts were far from him.*

For the Heart is always far from God, unleſs the Spirit of Chriſt be alive in it. But no one has the living Spirit of Chriſt, but he who in all his Converſation walketh, as he walked. Conſider theſe Words of the Apoſtle, *My little Children, of whom I travel in Birth, till Chriſt be formed in you.* This is the Sum total of all; and, if this is wanting, all is wanting. Again, ſays he, *He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly.—Circumciſion is nothing, and Uncircumciſion is nothing; but the new Creature* is all. Nay ſee how much further he carries this Point, in the following Words; *Though I ſpeak with the Tongues of Men and Angels, though I have the Gift of Prophecy, though I have all Faith, ſo that I could remove Mountains,* &c. *and have not Charity* (that is, have not the Spirit of Chriſt) *it profiteth me nothing.* For by *Charity* here, the Apoſtle means neither more nor leſs, but ſtrictly that ſame Thing, which, in other Places, he calls the *new Creature, Chriſt formed in us,* and our being

led by the Spirit of Chriſt. According to the Apoſtle, nothing availeth but the *new Creature*, nothing availeth but the Spirit of Charity here deſcribed; therefore this Charity, and the new Creature, are only two different Expreſſions of *one* and the *ſame* Thing, viz. the *Birth* and *Formation* of Chriſt in us. Thus ſaith he, *If any Man have not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his*; nay, though he could ſay of himſelf, (as our Lord ſays many will) Have I not propheſied in the Name of Chriſt, caſt out Devils, and done many wonderful Works? yet ſuch a one not being *led by the Spirit of Chriſt*, is that very Man, whoſe high State the Apoſtle makes to be a mere Nothing, becauſe he hath not that Spirit of Charity, which is the Spirit of Chriſt. Again, *There is no Condemnation to thoſe, who are in Chriſt Jeſus*; therefore to be in Chriſt Jeſus, is to have that Spirit of Charity, which is the Spirit, and Life, and Goodneſs of all Virtues. Now here you are to obſerve, that the Apoſtle no more rejects *all outward* Religion, when he ſays *Circumciſion is nothing*; than he rejects *Propheſying*, and *Faith*, and *Alms-giving*, when he ſays they *profit nothing*: he only teaches this ſolid Truth, that the Kingdom of God is within us, and that it all conſiſts in the State of our Heart; and

that

that therefore all outward Obſervances, all the moſt ſpecious Virtues, profit nothing, are of no Value, unleſs the hidden Man of the Heart, the new Creature, led by the Spirit of Chriſt, be the Doer of them.

Thus, ſays he, *They who are led by the Spirit of God, are the Sons of God.* And therefore none elſe, be they who, or where, or what they will, Clergy, or Laity, none are, or can be, Sons of God, but they who give up themſelves entirely to the Leading and Guidance of the Spirit of God, deſiring to be moved, inſpired, and governed ſolely by it.

Again, *We are of the Circumciſion, who worſhip God in Spirit*; and to ſhew, that this is not a vain Pretence, he ſays in another Place, *The Manifeſtation of the Spirit is given to every Man to profit withal.* Therefore *no Profit* from any Thing elſe; all Preaching and Hearing is vain, and all Preachers and Hearers ſtand chargeable with the Vanity of their religious Performances, who think of Preaching or Hearing *profitably*, any other Way, or by any other Power, than in and by the Holy Spirit of God dwelling and working in them. Thus again, *If the Spirit of him, who raiſed Jeſus from the Dead, dwell in you, he alſo ſhall quicken your mortal Bodies by his Spirit, which dwelleth in you.* In

vain

vain therefore is Life expected, either for Body or Soul, but by the Holy Spirit dwelling in them. Again, *Through him we both have Access by one Spirit to the Father*; therefore this *one Spirit* is the one only Way to God and Salvation. Thus does all Scripture bring us to this Conclusion, that all Religion is but a dead Work, unless it be the Work of the Spirit of God; and that Sacraments, Prayers, Singing, Preaching, Hearing, are only so many Ways of being fervent in the Spirit, and of giving up ourselves more and more to the inward working, enlightening, quickening, sanctifying Spirit of God within us; and all for this End, that the Curse of the *Fall* may be taken from us, that Death may be swallowed up in Victory, and a true, real, Christ-like Nature formed in us, by the same Spirit, by which it was formed in the holy Virgin *Mary*. Now for the true Ground, and absolute Necessity, of this turning wholly and solely to the Spirit of God, you need only know this plain Truth; namely, that the Spirit of God, the Spirit of *Satan*, or the Spirit of this World, are, and must be, the one or the other of them, the *continual* Leader, Guide, and Inspirer, of every Thing that lives in Nature. There is no going out from some one of

these;

theſe; the Moment you ceaſe to be moved, quickened, and inſpired by God, you are infallibly moved and directed by the Spirit of *Satan*, or the World, or by both of them. And the Reaſon is, becauſe the Soul of Man is a *Spirit*, and a *Life*, that in its whole Being is nothing elſe but a *Birth* both of God and Nature; and therefore, every Moment of its Life, it muſt live in ſome Union and Conjunction, either with the Spirit of God governing Nature, or with the Spirit of Nature fallen from God, and working in itſelf. As Creatures therefore, we are under an abſolute Neceſſity of being under the Motion, Guidance, and Inſpiration, of ſome Spirit, that is more and greater than our own. All that is put in our own Power, is only the Choice of our *Leader*; but led and moved we muſt be, and by that Spirit, to which we give up ourſelves, whether it be the Spirit of God, or the Spirit of fallen Nature. To ſeek therefore to be always under the Inſpiration and Guidance of God's Holy Spirit, and to act by an immediate Power from it, is not proud Enthuſiaſm, but as ſober and humble a Thought, as ſuitable to our State, as to think of renouncing the World, and the Devil: for they never are, or can be, renounced by us, but ſo far as the Spirit of God is living, breathing,

ing, and moving in us. And that for this plain Reaſon, becauſe nothing is contrary to the Spirit of *Satan*, and the World, nothing works, or can work, contrary to it, but the Spirit of Heaven.

Hence our Lord ſaid, *He that is not with me, is againſt me; and he that gathereth not with me, ſcattereth:* plainly declaring, that not to be with him, and led by his Spirit, is to be led by the Spirit of *Satan*, and the World. Aſk now, what Hell is? It is Nature deſtitute of the Light and Spirit of God, and full only of its own Darkneſs; nothing elſe can make it to be Hell. Aſk what Heaven is? It is Nature quickened, enlightened, bleſſed, and glorified, by the Light and Spirit of *God* dwelling in it. What Poſſibility therefore can there be, of our dividing from Hell, or parting with all that is helliſh in us, but by having the Life, Light, and Spirit of God living and working in us? And here again, my Friends, you may ſee in the greateſt Clearneſs, why nothing is available, nothing is Salvation, but the new Birth of a Chriſt-like Nature; it is becauſe every Thing elſe but this Birth and Life of the Spirit, is only the Spirit of *Satan*, or the Spirit of this World. Have you any Thing to object to theſe Things?

ACAD.

ACAD. Truly, Sir, all Objections are over with me; you have taken from me every Difficulty or Perplexity that I had, either about Religion, or the Providence of God. I can now look back into the firſt Origin of Things with Satisfaction: I have ſeen how the World and Man began to be, in a Way highly worthy of the divine Wiſdom, and how they both came into their preſent Condition, and how they both are to riſe out of it, and return back to their firſt State in a glorious Eternity. It now appears to me with the utmoſt Clearneſs, that to look for Salvation in any Thing elſe, but the Light of God *within* us, the Spirit of God working *in us*, the Birth of Chriſt *really* brought forth *in us*, is to be as carnally minded, as ignorant of God, and Man, and Salvation, as the Jews were, when their Hearts were wholly ſet upon the Glory of their *Temple-ſervice*, and a temporal Saviour to defend it, by a temporal Power. For every Thing but the Light and Spirit of God bringing forth a Birth of Chriſt in the Soul, every Thing elſe, be it what it will, has and can have no more of Salvation in it, than a temporal, fighting Saviour. For what is ſaid of the Impoſſibility of the Blood of Bulls, and of Goats, to take away Sins, muſt with the ſame Truth be ſaid of all other outward,

ward, creaturely Things; they are all at the ſame Diſtance from being the Salvation of the Soul, and in the ſame Degree of Inability to take away Sin, as the Blood of Bulls, and Goats.

And all this for this plain Reaſon, becauſe the Soul is a Spirit breathed forth from God himſelf, which therefore cannot be bleſſed but by having the Life of God in it; and nothing can bring the Life of God into it, but only the Light and Spirit of God. Upon this Ground I ſtand in the utmoſt Certainty, looking wholly to the Light and Spirit of God for an inward Redemption from all the inward Evil that is in my fallen Nature. All that I now want to know is this, what I am to do, to procure this continual Operation of the Spirit of God within me. For I ſeem to myſelf, not to know this enough; and I am alſo afraid of certain Deluſions, which I have heard many have fallen into, under Pretences of being led by the Spirit of God. Pray therefore, THEOPHILUS, give me ſome Inſtructions on this Head.

RUST. Pray, Gentlemen, let an unlearned Man ſpeak a Word here. Suppoſe, ACADEMICUS, you had a longing, earneſt Deſire to be governed by a *Spirit* of *Plainneſs* and *Sincerity* in your whole Converſation. Would this

this put you upon aſking for *Art*, and *Rules*, and *Methods*, or conſulting ſome learned Man, or Book, to direct you, and keep you from Deluſion? Would you not know and feel in yourſelf, that your own earneſt Deſire and Love of Sincerity and Plainneſs, and your own inward Averſion to every Thing that was contrary to it, muſt be the one only poſſible Way of attaining it, and that you muſt have it in that Degree, as you loved and liked to act by it? Now there is no more of *Art*, or any *Secret* required to bring and keep you under the Direction of the Spirit of God, than under the Spirit of Plainneſs and Sincerity. The longing earneſt Deſire of the Heart, brings you into the ſafe Poſſeſſion of the one, as it does of the other. For it has been enough proved, that the *Spirit of Prayer* forms the Spirit of our Lives, and every Man lives as the Spirit of Prayer leads him. Nay every Prayer for the Holy Spirit, is the Spirit itſelf praying in you. For nothing can turn to God, deſire to be united to him, and governed by him, but the Spirit of God. The Impoſſibility of praying for the Spirit of God in vain, is thus ſhewn by our bleſſed Lord: *If ye, being evil, know how to give good Gifts unto your Children, how much more ſhall your heavenly Father*

Father give the Holy Spirit to thoſe that aſk for it? But here I ſtop.

ACAD. I do not know how to underſtand what RUSTICUS has ſaid. For do not all good Chriſtians daily pray for the Spirit of God? yet how few are led by it? Pray, THEOPHILUS, do you ſpeak here.

THEOPH. People may be daily at the Service of the Church, and read long Prayers at home, in which are many Petitions for the Holy Spirit; and yet live and die, led and governed by the Spirit of the World; becauſe all theſe Prayers, whether we hear them read by others, or read them ourſelves, may be done in Compliance only to Duties, Rules, and Forms of Religion, as Things we are taught not to neglect; but, being only done thus, they are not the true, real Working of the Spirit of the Heart, nor make any real Alteration in it. But you are to obſerve, that RUSTICUS ſpoke of the *Spirit of Prayer*, which is the Heart's own Prayer, and which has all the Strength of the Heart in it. And this is the Prayer that muſt be affirmed to be *always* effectual; it never returns empty; it eats and drinks that, after which it hungereth and thirſteth; and nothing can poſſibly hinder it from having that, which it prays for. This we are aſſured of from theſe Words of Truth itſelf;

Bleſſed

Bleſſed are they that hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs, for they ſhall be filled. But this Bleſſedneſs could not belong to Hungering, if the truly Hungry and Thirſty could ever be ſent empty away. Every Spirit neceſſarily reaps that which it ſoweth; it cannot poſſibly be otherwiſe, it is the unalterable Procedure of Nature. Spirit is the firſt Power of Nature, every thing proceeds from it, is born of it, yields to it, and is governed by it. If the Spirit ſoweth to the Fleſh, it reapeth that Corruption which belongs to the Fleſh; if it ſoweth to the Spirit, it reapeth the Fruits of the Spirit, which are eternal Life. *The Spirit of Prayer* therefore is the Opener of all that is good within us, and the Receiver of all that is good without us; it unites with God, is one Power with him; it works with him, and drives all that is not God, out of the Soul. The Soul is no longer a Slave to its natural Impurity and Corruption, no longer impriſoned in its own Death and Darkneſs, but till the Fire from Heaven, the Spirit of Prayer, is kindled in it.

Then begins the Reſurrection, and the Life; and all that which died in *Adam*, comes to Life in Chriſt. Aſk not therefore, ACADEMICUS, what you are to do to obtain the Spirit of God, to live in it, and be led by it; for your Power of having it, and your Meaſure

of receiving it, are juſt according to that *Faith* and Earneſtneſs with which you deſire to be led by it. For the hungry Spirit of Prayer is *that Faith*, to which all Things are poſſible; to which all Nature, though as high as Mountains, and as ſtiff as Oaks, muſt yield and obey. It heals all Diſeaſes, breaks the Bands of Death, and calls the Dead out of their Graves. Look at the ſmall *Seeds* of Plants, ſhut up in their own dead Huſks, and covered with thick Earth, and ſee how they grow. What do they do? They *hunger* and *thirſt* after the Light and Air of this World. Their Hunger eats that which they hunger after, and is their Vegetation. If the Plant ceaſes to hunger, it withers and dies, though ſurrounded with the Air and Light of this World.

This is the true Nature of the ſpiritual Life; it is as truly a Growth or *Vegetation*, as that of Plants; and nothing but its *own Hunger* can help it to the true Food of its Life. If this Hunger of the Soul ceaſeth, it withers and dies, though in the midſt of Divine Plenty. Our Lord, to ſhew us that the new Birth is really a State of ſpiritual Vegetation, compares it to a ſmall Grain of Muſtard-ſeed, from whence a great Plant ariſes. Now every Seed has a Life in itſelf, or elſe it could not grow. What is this Life?

It

It is nothing elſe but an *Hunger* in the Seed, after the Air and Light of this World; which Hunger, being met and fed by the Light and Air of Nature, changes the Seed into a living Plant. Thus it is with the *Seed* of Heaven in the Soul; it has a Life in itſelf, or elſe no Life could ariſe from it. What is this Life? It is nothing elſe but Faith; or an *Hunger* after God and Heaven; which no ſooner ſtirs, or is ſuffered to ſtir, but it is met, embraced, and quickened, by the *Light* and *Spirit* of God and Heaven; and ſo a new Man in Chriſt is formed from the Seed of Heaven, as a new Plant from a Seed in the Earth. Let us ſuppoſe now, that the *Seed* of a Plant had *Senſe* and *Reaſon*; and that, inſtead of continually hungering after, and drawing in the Virtue of the Light and Air of our outward Nature, it ſhould amuſe and content its Hunger with *reaſoning* about the Nature of Hunger, and the different Powers and Virtues of Light and Air; muſt not ſuch a Seed of all Neceſſity wither away, without ever becoming a living Plant? Now this is no falſe Similitude of the *Seed* of Life in Man: Man has a Power of drawing all the Virtue of Heaven into himſelf, becauſe the *Seed* of Heaven is the *Gift* of God in his Soul, which wants the Light and Spirit of God to bring it to the Birth, juſt as the

Seed of the Plant wants the Light and Air of this World; it cannot poſſibly grow up in God, but by taking in Light, Life, and Spirit from Heaven, as the Creatures of Time take in the Light, and Life, and Spirit of this World. If therefore the Soul, inſtead of *hungering* after Heaven, inſtead of eating the Fleſh and Blood of the Chriſt of God, contents and amuſes this *Seed* of Life with *Ideas*, and *Notions*, and Sounds, muſt not ſuch a Soul of Neceſſity wither, and die, without ever becoming a living Creature of Heaven? Wonder not, therefore, ACADEMICUS, that *all the Work* of our Salvation and Regeneration is, by the Scripture, *wholly* confined to the Operation of the Light and Spirit of God, *living* and *working* in us. It is for the ſame Reaſon, and on the ſame Neceſſity, that the Life and Growth of the Creatures of this World, muſt be *wholly* aſcribed to the Powers of this World, living and working in them. Nor does all this, in the leaſt Degree, make Man a *Machine*, or without any Power with regard to his Salvation. He muſt grow in God, as the *Plants* grow in this World, from a Power that is not his own, as they grow from the Powers of outward Nature. But he differs entirely from the Plants in this; that an *uncontroulable* Will, which is his own, muſt be the Leader

Leader and Beginner of his Growth, either in God, or Nature. It is ſtrictly true, that all Man's Salvation dependeth upon himſelf; and it is as ſtrictly true, that *all the Work* of his Salvation, is *ſolely* the Work of God in his Soul. All his Salvation dependeth upon himſelf, becauſe his *Will-Spirit* has its Power of Motion in itſelf. As a Will, it can only receive that which it willeth; every Thing elſe is abſolutely ſhut out of it. For it is the unalterable Nature of the Will, that it cannot poſſibly receive any Thing into it, but that which it *willeth*; its Willing is its only Power of receiving; and therefore there can be no poſſible Entrance for God or Heaven into the Soul, till the *Will-Spirit* of the Soul deſireth it; and thus all Man's Salvation dependeth upon himſelf. On the other hand, nothing can create, effect, or bring forth, a Birth or Growth of the Divine Life in the Soul, but that *Light* and *Spirit* of God, which brings forth the Divine Life in Heaven, and all heavenly Beings; and thus the *Work* of our Salvation is wholly and ſolely the Work of the Light and Spirit of God, dwelling and operating in us. Thus, ACADEMICUS, you ſee that God is all; that nothing but *his Life* and *working Power* in us, can be our Salvation; and yet that nothing but the *Spirit of Prayer* can make it *poſſible* for us to have

it, or be capable of it. And therefore neither you, nor any other human Soul, can be *without* the Operation of the Light and Spirit of God in it, but becauſe its *Will-Spirit*, or its Spirit of *Prayer*, is turned towards ſomething elſe; for we are always in Union with *that*, with which our Will is united. Again: look, ACADEMICUS, at the Light and Air of this World; you ſee with what a Freedom of Communication they *overflow*, *enrich* and *enliven* every Thing; they enter every where, if not hindered by *ſomething* that withſtands their Entrance. This may repreſent to you the *ever-overflowing*, free Communication of the Light and Spirit of God, to every human Soul. They are every where; we are encompaſſed with them; our Souls are as near to them, as our Bodies are to the Light and Air of this World; nothing ſhuts them out of us, but the Will and Deſire of our Souls, turned from them, and *praying* for ſomething elſe. I ſay, *praying* for ſomething elſe; for you are to notice this, as a certain Truth, that every Man's Life is a *continual State* of Prayer; he is no Moment free from it, nor can poſſibly be ſo. For all our natural Tempers, be they what they will, Ambition, Covetouſneſs, Selfiſhneſs, Worldly-mindedneſs, Pride, Envy, Hatred, Malice, or any other Luſt whatever, are all

of

of them in Reality, only ſo many different *Kinds* and *Forms* of a *Spirit of Prayer*, which is as inſeparable from the Heart, as Weight is from the Body. For every natural Temper is nothing elſe, but a Manifeſtation of the Deſire and Prayer of the Heart, and ſhews us, how it *works*, and wills. And as the Heart worketh, and willeth, *ſuch*, and no other, is its Prayer. All elſe is only *Form*, and *Fiction*, and empty beating of the Air. If therefore the working Deſire of the Heart is not habitually turned towards God, if this is not our Spirit of Prayer, we are *neceſſarily* in a State of Prayer towards ſomething elſe, that carries us from God, and brings all kind of Evil into us. For this is the Neceſſity of our Nature; pray we muſt, as ſure as our Heart is alive; and therefore when the State of our Heart is not a Spirit of Prayer to God, we pray *without ceaſing* to ſome or other Part of the Creation. The Man whoſe Heart habitually tends towards the Riches, Honours, Powers, or Pleaſures of this Life, is in a *continual* State of Prayer towards all theſe Things. His Spirit ſtands always *bent* towards them; they have his Hope, his Love, his Faith, and are the many Gods that he worſhips: and though when he is upon his Knees, and uſes Forms of Prayer, he directs them to the God of Heaven; yet theſe are in Reality the God

of his Heart; and in a ſad Senſe of the Words, he really worſhips them in Spirit, and in Truth. Hence you may ſee, ACADEMICUS, how it comes to paſs, that there is ſo much Praying, and yet ſo little of true Piety amongſt us. The *Bells* are daily calling us to Church, our *Cloſets* abound with *Manuals* of Devotion, yet how little Fruit! It is all for this Reaſon, becauſe our Prayers are not *our own*; they are not the Abundance of *our own* Heart; are not *found* and *felt* within us, as we feel our own Hunger and Thirſt; but are only ſo many *borrowed Forms* of Speech, which we uſe at certain Times, and Occaſions. And therefore it is no Wonder that little Good comes of it. What Benefit could it have been to the *Phariſee*, if, with an Heart inwardly full of its own Pride and Self-exaltation, he had outwardly hung down his Head, ſmote upon his Breaſt, and borrowed the *Publican's* Word's, *God be merciful to me a Sinner?* What greater Good can be expected from our Praying in the Words of *David*, or Singing his Pſalms ſeven Times a Day, if our Heart hath no more of the Spirit of *David* in it, than the Heart of the *Phariſee* had, of the Spirit of the humble *Publican?*

ACAD. O THEOPHILUS, Truth and Reaſon forces me to conſent to what you ſay; and yet I am afraid of following you: for you

you here seem to condemn Forms of Prayer in public, and *Manuals* of Devotion in private. What will become of Religon, if these are set aside or disregarded?

Theoph. Dear Academicus, abate your Fright. Can you think, that I am against your praying in the Words of *David*, or breathing his Spirit in your Prayers, or that I would censure your singing his Psalms seven Times a Day? Remember how very lately I put into your Hands the *Book* called, *A serious Call to a devout Life*, &c. and then think how unlikely it is, that I should be against Times and Methods of Devotion. At three several Times, we are told, our Lord prayed, repeating the *same Form of Words*; and therefore a set Form of Words are not only consistent with, but may be highly suitable to, the most divine Spirit of Prayer. If your own Heart, for Days and Weeks, was unable to alter, or break off from invardly thinking and saying, *Hallowed be thy Name, thy Kingdom come, thy Will be done*; if at other Times, for Weeks and Months, it stood always inwardly in another Form of Prayer, unable to vary, or depart fron saying, *Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly, with all thy holy Nature, Spirit, and Tempers, into my Soul; that I may be born again of The, a new Creature*; I should be so

ſo far from cenſuring ſuch a *Formality* of Prayer, that I ſhould ſay, Bleſſed and happy are they, whoſe Hearts are tied to ſuch a Form of Words. It is not therefore, Sir, a ſet Form of Words that is ſpoken againſt, but an *heartleſs* Form, a Form that has no Relation to, or Correſpondence with, the State of the Heart that uſes it. All that I have ſaid is only to teach you the true Nature of Prayer, that it is only the Work of the Heart, and that the Heart only prays in Reality (whatever its Words are) for that which it habitually *wills*, *likes*, *loves*, and *longs* to have. It is not therefore the uſing the Words of *David*, or any other Saint, in your Prayers, that is cenſured, but the uſing them without that State of Heart, which firſt ſpake them forth; and the truſting to them, becauſe they are a good Form, though in our Hearts we have nothing that is like them. It would be good to ſay inceſſantly with holy *David*, *My Heart is athirſt for God.*——*As the Hart deſireth the Water-brooks, ſo longeth my Soul after Thee, O God.* But there is no Goodneſs in ſaying daily theſe Words, if no *ſuch Thirſt* is felt, if no ſuch Deſire lives in the Heart. And, my Friend, you may eaſily know, that dead Forms of Religion, and Numbers of repeated Prayers, keep Men content with their

their State of Devotion, becauſe they make uſe of ſuch holy Prayers; though their Hearts, from Morning to Night, are in a State quite contrary to them, and join no further in them, than in liking to uſe them at certain Times.

ACAD. I acquieſce, THEOPHILUS, in the Truth of what you have ſaid, and plainly ſee the Neceſſity of condemning what you have condemned, which is not the Form, but the *heartleſs* Form. But ſtill I have a Scruple upon me: I ſhall be almoſt afraid of going to Church, where there are ſo many good Prayers offered up to God, as ſuſpecting they may not be the Prayers or Language of my own Heart, and ſo become only a *Lip-labour*, or, what is worſe, an *Hypocriſy* before God.

THEOPH. I do not, ACADEMICUS, diſlike your Scruple at all; for you do well to be afraid of ſaying any Thing of yourſelf, or to God, in your Prayers, which your Heart does not truly ſay. It is alſo good for you to think, that many of the Prayers of the Church may go faſter, and higher, than your Heart can in Truth go along with them. For this will put you upon a right Care over yourſelf, and ſo to live, that, as a true Son of your Mother the Church, your Heart may be able to ſpeak her Language,

guage, conform to her Service, and find the Delight of your Soul in the Spirit of her Prayers. But this will only then come to paſs, when the Spirit of Prayer is the Spirit of your Heart; then every good Word, whether in a Form, or out of a Form, whether heard, or read, or thought, will be as ſuitable to your Heart, as gratifying to it, as Food is to the hungry, and Drink to the thirſty Soul. But till the Spirit of the Heart is thus renewed, till it is *emptied* of all earthly Deſires, and ſtands in an *habitual* Hunger and Thirſt after God (which is the true Spirit of Prayer) till then, all our Forms of Prayer will be, more or leſs, but too much like *Leſſons* that are given to *Scholars*; and we ſhall moſtly ſay them, only becauſe we dare not neglect them. But be not diſcouraged, ACADEMICUS; take the following Advice, and then you may go to Church without any Danger of mere Lip-labour or Hypocriſy; although there ſhould be a *Hymn*, or a *Pſalm*, or a *Prayer*, whoſe Language is higher than that of your own Heart. Do this: go to the Church, as the *Publican* went into the Temple; ſtand *inwardly* in the Spirit of your Mind, in that *Form* which he outwardly expreſſed, when he caſt down his Eyes, ſmote upon his Breaſt, and could

could only ſay, God be merciful to me a Sinner! Stand unchangably (at leaſt in your Deſire) in *this Form* and State of Heart: it will ſanctify every Petition that comes out of your Mouth; and when any Thing is read, or ſung, or prayed, that is more exalted and fervent than your Heart is, if you make this an Occaſion of a further *ſinking down* in the Spirit of the *Publican*, you will then be helped, and highly bleſſed, by thoſe Prayers and Praiſes, which ſeem only to fit, and belong to, a better Heart than yours.

This, my Friend, is a Secret of Secrets; it will help you to reap where you have not ſown, and be a continual Source of Grace in your Soul. This will not only help you to receive Good from thoſe Prayers, which ſeem too good for the State of your Heart, but will help you to find Good from every Thing elſe: for every Thing that inwardly ſtirs in you, or outwardly happens to you, becomes a real Good to you, if it either finds or excites in you this humble Form of Mind: for nothing is in vain, or without Profit, to the humble Soul; like the Bee, it takes its Honey even from bitter Herbs; it ſtands always in a State of Divine Growth; and every Thing that falls upon it, is like a Dew of Heaven to it. Shut up yourſelf therefore in this *Form* of Humility

Humility, all Good is incloſed in it; it is a Water of Heaven, that turns the Fire of the fallen Soul, into the Meekneſs of the Divine Life; and creates that Oil, out of which the Love to God and Man gets its Flame. Be incloſed therefore always in it; let it be as a Garment wherewith you are always covered, and the Girdle with which you are girt; breathe nothing but in and from its Spirit; ſee nothing but with its Eyes; hear nothing but with its Ears: and then, whether you are in the Church, or out of the Church, hearing the Praiſes of God, or receiving Wrongs from Men and the World; all will be Edification, and every Thing will help forward your Growth in the Life of God.

ACAD. Indeed, THEOPHILUS, this Anſwer to my Scruple is quite good: I not only like, but I love it much; it gives as well an Unction to my Heart, as a Light to my Mind. All my Deſire now is, to live no longer to the World, to myſelf, my own natural Tempers and Paſſions, but wholly to the Will of the bleſſed and adorable God, moved and guided by his Holy Spirit.

THEOPH. This Reſolution, ACADEMICUS, only ſhews that you are juſt come to yourſelf; for every Thing ſhort of this earneſt Deſire to live wholly unto God, may be

be called a moſt dreadful Infatuation or Madneſs, an Inſenſibility that cannot be deſcribed. For what elſe is our Life, but a *Trial* for the greateſt Evil, or Good, that an Eternity can give us? What can be ſo dreadful, as to die poſſeſſed of a wicked immortal Nature; or to go out of this World with Tempers, that muſt keep us for ever burning in our *own Fire* and Brimſtone? What has not God done to prevent this? His redeeming Love began with our Fall, and kindles itſelf as a Spark of Heaven in every fallen Soul. It calls every Man to Salvation, and every Man is forced to hear, though he will not obey his Voice. God has ſo loved the World, that his only Son hung and expired, bleeding on the Croſs, not to atone his *own* Wrath againſt us, but to extinguiſh our *own Hell* within us, to pour his heavenly Love into us, to ſhew us, that Meekneſs, Suffering, and Dying to our own fallen Nature, is the *one only poſſible* Way, for fallen Man to be alive again in God. Are we yet Sons of Pride, and led away with Vanity? Do the Powers of Darkneſs rule over us? Do impure evil Spirits poſſeſs and drive on our Lives? Has Sin loſt all its Power of frighting us? Is Remorſe of Conſcience no longer felt? Are Falſehood, Guile, Debauchery, Profaneneſs, Perjury, Bribery, Corruption, and Adultery,

tery, no longer ſeeking to hide themſelves in Corners, but openly entering all our high Places, giving Battle to every Virtue, and laying Claim to the Government of the World? Are we thus near being ſwallowed up by a Deluge of Vice and Impiety? All this is not come upon us, becauſe God has left us too much without Help from Heaven, or too much expoſed to the Powers of Hell; but it is, becauſe we have rejected and deſpiſed the *whole Myſtery* of our Salvation, and trampled under Foot the precious Blood of Chriſt, which alone has that Omnipotence, that can either bring Heaven into us, or drive Hell out of us. O *Britain*, *Britain*, think that the Son of God ſaith unto thee, as he ſaid to Jeruſalem, *O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, how often would I have gathered thy Children, as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her Wings, and ye would not! Behold, your Houſe is left unto you deſolate.* And now let me ſay, What aileth thee, O *Britiſh* Earth, that thou *quakeſt*, and the Foundations of thy Churches that they *totter?* Juſt *that ſame* aileth thee, as ailed *Judah*'s Earth, when the Divine Saviour of the World, dying on the Croſs, was *reviled, ſcorned,* and *mocked,* by the Inhabitants of *Jeruſalem*; then the *Earth quaked, the Rocks rent,* and the Sun refuſed to give its Light. Nature again declares for God; the

the Earth, and the Elements, can no longer bear our Sins: *Jeruſalem*'s Doom for *Jeruſalem*'s Sin, may well be feared by us. O ye miſerable *Pens* dipt in *Satan*'s Ink, that dare to publiſh the Folly of believing in Jeſus Chriſt, where will you hide your guilty Heads, when Nature diſſolved, ſhall ſhew you the Rainbow, on which the crucified Saviour ſhall ſit in Judgment, and every Work receive its Reward? O tremble! ye *apoſtate* Sons, that come out of the Schools of Chriſt, to fight *Lucifer*'s Battles, and do that for him, which neither he nor his Legions can do for themſelves. Their inward Pride, Spite, Wrath, Malice and Rage againſt God and Chriſt, and human Nature, have no *Pens* but yours, no *Apoſtles* but you. They muſt be forced to work in the Dark, to ſteal privately into impure Hearts, could they not beguile you into a fond *Belief*, that you are *Lovers* of Truth, *Friends* of Reaſon, *Detectors* of Fraud, great *Geniuſes*, and *Moral Philoſophers*, merely, and ſolely, becauſe ye blaſpheme Chriſt, and the Goſpel of God. Poor deluded Souls, reſcued from Hell by the Blood of Chriſt, called by God to poſſeſs the Thrones of fallen Angels, permitted to live only by the Mercy of God, that ye may be born again from above, my Heart bleeds for you. Think, I beſeech you, in Time,

what Mercies ye are trampling under your Feet. Say not that *Reaſon*, and your intellectual Faculties, ſtand in your Way; that theſe are the *beſt Gifts* that God has given you, and that theſe ſuffer you not to come to Chriſt. For all this is as vain a Pretence, and as groſs a Miſtake, as if ye were to ſay, that you had nothing but your *Feet* to carry you to Heaven. For your *Heart* is the beſt and greateſt *Gift* of God to you; it is the higheſt, greateſt, ſtrongeſt, and nobleſt *Power* of your Nature; it forms your whole Life, be it what it will; all Evil and all Good comes from it; your Heart alone has the Key of Life and Death; it does all that it will: Reaſon is but its *Play-thing*, and whether in Time or Eternity, can only be a *mere Beholder* of the *Wonders* of Happineſs, or *Forms* of Miſery, which the right, or wrong *Working* of the Heart is entered into.

I will here give you an infallible *Touch-ſtone*, that will try all to the Truth. It is this: Retire from the World, and all Converſation, only for *one Month*; neither write, nor read, nor debate any Thing in private with yourſelf; ſtop all the former Workings of your Heart and Mind; and, with all the Strength of your Heart, ſtand all this Month as continually as you can, in this following Form of Prayer to God. Offer it frequently

on

on your Knees; but, whether ſitting, ſtanding, or walking, be always inwardly longing, and earneſtly praying this *one Prayer* to God: "That of his great Goodneſs, he would "make known to you, and take from your "Heart, every *Kind*, and *Form*, and *Degree* "of Pride, whether it be from evil Spirits, "or your own corrupt Nature; and that he "would awaken in you the deepeſt *Depth* "and *Truth* of all that Humility, which can "make you capable of his Light, and Holy "Spirit." Reject every Thought, but that of wiſhing, and praying in this Manner from the Bottom of your Heart, with ſuch Truth and Earneſtneſs, as People in Torment wiſh and pray to be delivered from it. Now if ye dare not, if your Hearts will not, cannot give themſelves up in this Manner to the Spirit of this Prayer, then the *Touchſtone* has done its Work; and ye may be as fully aſſured, both what your Infidelity is, and from what it proceeds, as ye can be of the plaineſt Truth in Nature. This will ſhew you, how vainly you appeal to your *Reaſon* and *Speculation*, as the Cauſe of your Infidelity; that it is full as falſe and abſurd, as if *Thieves*, and *Adulterers* ſhould ſay, that their Theft and Adultery was entirely owing to their bodily *Eyes*, which ſhewed them external Objects, and not to any Thing that was *wrong*

or *bad* in their Hearts. On the other Hand, if ye can, and will give yourſelves up in *Truth* and *Sincerity* to this Spirit of Prayer, I will venture to affirm, that if ye had twice as many evil Spirits in you, as *Mary Magdalen* had, they will all be caſt out of you; and ye will be forced, with her, to weep with Tears of Love, at the Feet of the Holy Jeſus.

But here, my Friends, I ſtop, that we may return to the Matter we had in Hand.

Rust. You have made no Digreſſion, Theophilus, from our main Point, which was to recommend Chriſtianity to poor Humanus. He muſt, I am ſure, have felt the Deaths-blows, that you have here given to the Infidel Scheme. Their *Idol* of Reaſon, which is the vain God that they worſhip in vain, is here like *Dagon* fallen to the Ground, never to riſe up again. Humanus is caught by your *Bait* of Love, and I dare ſay he wants only to have this Converſation ended, that he may try himſelf to the Truth, by this divine *Touchſtone*, which you have put into his Hands.

Acad. Give me leave, Gentlemen, to add one Word to this Matter. Theophilus has here fairly pulled *Reaſon* out of its uſurped Throne, and ſhewn it to be a powerleſs, idle *Toy*, when compared to the royal Strength of the Heart, which is the kingly Power, that has

has all the Government of Life in its Hands. But if HUMANUS, or any one elſe, would ſee *Reaſon* fully mantained in all its *juſt Rights*, and yet entirely diſarmed of all its Pretences to a Religion of *its own*, and the Truth of the Goſpel fully proved to every Man, learned, or unlearned, from the known State of his own Heart; if he would ſee all this ſet forth in the ſtrongeſt, cleareſt Light, he need only read about an hundred Pages of a *Book** publiſhed about twelve Years ago, to which no Anſwer has, nor, it may be, ever will be given by any Patron of Reaſon and Infidelity. And if Part of that Book (as I have often wiſhed) beginning at Page 161, to 275, was printed by itſelf, and known and read in every Part of the Kingdom, all Chriſtians, though no Scholars, would have Learning enough both to ſee the *deep*, *true*, and *comfortable* Foundation of their Goſpel Faith, and the miſerable Folly and Ignorance of thoſe, who would ſet up a Religion of Human Reaſon inſtead of it. But now, THEOPHILUS, I beg we may return to that very Point concerning Prayer, where we left off. I think my Heart is entirely devoted to God; and that I deſire nothing but to live in ſuch

* A Demonſtration of the Groſs and Fundamental Errors of a late Book called, *A Plain Account of the Nature*, &c. *of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.*

a State of Prayer, as may beſt keep me under the Guidance and Direction of the Holy Spirit. Aſſiſt me therefore, my dear Friend, in this important Matter; give me the fulleſt Directions, that you can; and if you have any *Manual* of Devotion that you prefer, or any Method that you would put me in, pray let me know it.

RUST. I beg leave to ſpeak a Word to ACADEMICUS. I am glad, Sir, to ſee this Fire of Heaven thus far kindled in your Soul; but wonder that you ſhould want to know, how you are to keep up its Flame, which is like wanting to know, how you are to *love* and *deſire* that, which you do love and deſire. Does a blind, or ſick, or lame Man want to know, how he ſhall *wiſh* and *deſire* Sight, Health, and Limbs? or would he be at a Loſs, till ſome *Form* of Words taught him how to long for them? Now you can have no Deſire or Prayer for any *Grace*, or Help from God, till you in ſome Degree as ſurely feel the *Want* of them, and deſire the *Good* of them, as the ſick Man feels the Want, and deſires the Good, of Health. But when this is your Caſe, you want no more to be told how to pray, than the thirſty Man wants to be told, what he ſhall aſk for. Have you not fully conſented to this Truth, that the Heart only can pray; and that it prays for

for nothing but *that*, which it *loves*, *wills*, and *wiſhes* to have? But can *Love*, or *Deſire* want *Art*, or *Method*, to teach it to be, that which it is? If from the Bottom of your Heart you have a ſincere, warm Love for your moſt valuable Friend, would you want to buy a Book, to tell you what Sentiments you feel in your Heart towards this Friend; what Comfort, what Joy, what Gratitude, what Truſt, what Honour, what Confidence, what Faith, are all alive, and ſtirring in your Hearts towards him? Aſk not therefore, ACADEMICUS, for a Book of Prayers; but aſk your Heart, what is *within* it, what it *feels*, how it *ſtirs*, what it *wants*, what it would have altered, what it deſires; and then, inſtead of calling upon THEOPHILUS for Aſſiſtance, ſtand in the ſame Form of Petition to God.

For this turning to God according to the inward *Feeling*, *Want*, and *Motion* of your own Heart, in Love, in Truſt, in Faith of having from him all that you want, and wiſh to have; this turning thus unto God, whether it be with, or without Words, is the beſt Form of Prayer in the World.—Now no Man can be ignorant of the State of his own Heart, or a Stranger to thoſe Tempers, that are alive and ſtirring in him; and therefore no Man can want a Form of Prayer; for

what ſhould be the Form of his Prayer, but that which the Condition, and State of his Heart demands? If you know of no Trouble, feel no Burden, want nothing to be altered, or removed, nothing to be increaſed or ſtrengthened in you, how can you pray for any thing of this Kind? But if your Heart knows its own Plague, feels its inward Evil, knows what it wants to have removed, will you not let your Diſtreſs form the Manner of your Prayer? or will you pray in a Form of Words, that have no more Agreement with your State, than if a Man walking above-ground, ſhould beg every Man he met, to pull him out of a deep Pit. For Prayers not formed according to the *real* State of your Heart, are but like a Prayer to be pulled out of a deep Well, when you are not in it. Hence you may ſee, how unreaſonable it is to make a Myſtery of Prayer, or an Art that needs ſo much Inſtruction; ſince every Man is, and only can be, directed by his *own inward* State and Condition, when, and how, and for what he is to pray, as every Man's *outward* State ſhews him what he outwardly wants. And yet it ſhould ſeem, as if a Prayer-Book was highly neceſſary, and ought to be the Performance of great Learning and Abilities, ſince only our learned Men and Scholars make our Prayer-Books.

ACAD.

ACAD. I did not imagine, RUSTICUS, that you would have ſo openly declared againſt *Manuals* of Devotion, ſince you cannot but know, that not only the moſt learned, but the moſt pious Doctors of the Church, conſider them as neceſſary Helps to Devotion.

RUST. If you, ACADEMICUS, was obliged to go a long Journey on *Foot*, and yet through a Weakneſs in your Legs could not ſet one Foot before another, you would do well to get the beſt travelling *Crutches* that you could.

But if, with ſound and good Legs, you would not ſtir one Step, till you had got *Crutches* to hop with; ſurely a Man might ſhew you the Folly of not walking with your own Legs, without being thought a declared Enemy to Crutches, or the Makers of them. Now a *Manual* is not ſo good an Help as *Crutches*, and yet you ſee Crutches are only proper, when our Legs cannot do their Office. It is, I ſay, not ſo good an Help as Crutches, becauſe that which you do with the Crutches, is that *very ſame* Thing, that you ſhould have done with your Legs; you *really* travel; but when the Heart cannot take one Step in Prayer, and you therefore read your Manual, you do not do that *very ſame* Thing, which your Heart ſhould have done, that is, *really* pray. A fine Manual therefore is not

to

to be considered as a Means of praying, or as something that puts you in a State of Prayer, as Crutches help you to travel; but its chief Use as a Book of Prayers to a dead and hardened Heart, that has no Prayer of its own, is to shew it, what a *State* and *Spirit* of Prayer it *wants*, and at what a sad Distance it is from feeling all that Variety of humble, penitent, grateful, fervent, resigned, loving Sentiments, which are described in the Manual, that so, being touched with a View of its own miserable State, it may begin its own Prayer to God for Help. But I have done. THEOPHILUS may now answer your earnest Request.

THEOPH. Your earnest Desire, ACADEMICUS, to live in the Spirit of Prayer, and to be truly governed by it, is a most excellent Desire; for to be a Man of Prayer, is that which the Apostle means by *living in the Spirit, and having our Conversation in Heaven.* It is to have done, not only with the confessed Vices, but with the allowed Follies and Vanities of this World. To tell such a Soul of the *Innocency* of Levity, that it need not run away from idle Discourse, vain Gaiety, and trifling Mirth, as being the harmless Relief of our heavy Natures, is like telling the *Flame*, that it need not always be ascending upwards. But here you are to observe, that

that this Spirit of Prayer is not to be taught you by a Book, or brought into you by an *Art* from without; but muſt be an inward Birth, that muſt ariſe from your own *Fire* and *Light* within you, as the Air ariſes from the Fire and Light of this World. For the Spirit of every Being, be it what or where it will, or be its Spirit of what Kind it will, is only the Breath or Spirit that proceeds from its own Fire and Light. In vegetative, ſenſitive, and intellectual Creatures, it is all in the ſame Manner: Spirit is the *third Form* of its Life, is the Birth that proceeds from the other *two*, and is the Manifeſtation of their Nature and Qualities. For ſuch as the Fire and Light are, ſuch and no other, neither higher nor lower, neither better nor worſe, is the *Spirit* that proceeds from them. Now the Reaſon why all, and every Life does, and muſt ſtand in this Form, is wholly and ſolely from hence, becauſe the Deity, the one Source and Fountain of all Life, is a *triune* God, whoſe *third Form* is, and is called, the Spirit of God, proceeding from the Father, and the Son.

The *painful* Senſe and Feeling of what you are, kindled into a working State of Senſibility by the Light of God within you, is the *Fire* and *Light* from whence your Spirit of Prayer proceeds. In its firſt kindling nothing

nothing is found or felt, but Pain, Wrath, and Darkneſs, as is to be ſeen in the firſt kindling of every Heat or Fire. And therefore its firſt Prayer is nothing elſe but a Senſe of Penitence, Self-condemnation, Confeſſion, and Humility. It feels nothing but its own Miſery, and ſo is all Humility. This Prayer of Humility is met by the divine Love, the Mercifulneſs of God embraces it; and then its Prayer is changed into Hymns, and Songs, and Thankſgivings. When this State of Fervour has done its Work, has melted away all earthly Paſſions and Affections, and left no Inclination in the Soul, but to delight in God alone, then its Prayer changes again. It is now come ſo near to God, has found ſuch Union with him, that it does not ſo much pray to as live in God. Its Prayer is not any particular Action, is not the Work of any particular Faculty, not confined to Times, or Words, or Place, but is the Work of its whole Being, which continually ſtands in Fulneſs of Faith, in Purity of Love, in abſolute Reſignation, to do, and be, what and how its Beloved pleaſeth. This is the laſt State of the Spirit of Prayer, and is its higheſt Union with God in this Life. Each of theſe foregoing States has its Time, its Variety of Workings, its Trials, Temptations, and Purifications, which can only be

known

known by Experience in the Paſſage through them. The *one* only and *infallible* Way to go ſafely through all the Difficulties, Trials, Temptations, Dryneſs, or Oppoſition, of our own evil Tempers, is this: it is to expect nothing from ourſelves, to truſt to nothing in ourſelves, but in every Thing expect, and depend upon God for Relief. Keep faſt hold of this *Thread*, and then let your Way be what it will, Darkneſs, Temptation, or the Rebellion of Nature, you will be led through all, to an Union with God: for nothing hurts us in any State, but an Expectation of ſomething in it, and from it, which we ſhould only expect from God. We are looking for our *own* Virtue, our *own* Piety, our *own* Goodneſs, and ſo live on and on in our *own* Poverty and Weakneſs; To-day pleaſed and comforted with the ſeeming Strength and Firmneſs of our own pious Tempers, and fancying ourſelves to be *ſomewhat*; To-morrow, fallen into our own *Mire*, we are dejected, but not humbled; we grieve, but it is only the Grief of Pride, at the ſeeing our Perfection not to be ſuch as we vainly imagined. And thus it will be, till the *whole Turn* of our Minds is ſo changed, that we as fully ſee and know our *Inability* to have any Goodneſs of *our own*, as to have a Life of our own.

For

For ſince nothing is, or can be, good in us, but the Life of God manifeſted in us, how can this be had but from God alone? When we are happily brought to this Conviction, then we have done with all Thought of being our own Builders; the whole Spirit of our Mind is become a mere *Faith*, and *Hope*, and *Truſt* in the ſole Operation of God's Spirit, looking no more to any other Power, to be formed in Chriſt new Creatures, than we look to any other Power for the Reſurrection of our Bodies at the laſt Day. Hence may be ſeen, that the Trials of every State are its greateſt Bleſſings; they do that for us, which we moſt of all want to have done; they force us to know our own *Nothingneſs*, and the *All* of God.

People who have long dwelt in the Fervours of Devotion, in an high Senſibility of divine Affections, practiſing every Virtue with a kind of Greedineſs, are frighted, when *Coldneſs* ſeizes upon them, when their Hymns give no Tranſport, and their Hearts, inſtead of flaming with the Love of every Virtue, ſeem ready to be overcome by every Vice. But here, keep *faſt Hold* of the Thread I mentioned before, and all is well. For this *Coldneſs* is the divine *Offspring*, or genuine Birth, of the former Fervour; it comes from it as a good Fruit, and brings the Soul nearer

to

to God, than the Fervour did. The Fervour was good, and did a good Work in the Soul; it overcame the earthly Nature, and made the Soul delight in God, and ſpiritual Things; but its Delight was too much an *own Delight*, a fanſied Self-holineſs, and occaſioned Reſt and Satisfaction in Self, which if it had continued uninterrupted, undiſcovered, an earthly Self had only been changed into a ſpiritual Self. Therefore I called this Coldneſs, or Loſs of Fervour, its divine *Offspring*, becauſe it brings a divine Effect, or more fruitful Progreſs in the divine Life. For this Coldneſs overcomes, and delivers us from ſpiritual Self, as Fervour overcame the earthly Nature. It does the Work that Fervour did, but in an higher Degree, becauſe it gives more, ſacrifices more, and brings forth more Reſignation to God, than Fervour did; and therefore it is more in God, and receives more from him. The devout Soul therefore is always ſafe in every State, if it makes every Thing an Occaſion either of riſing up, or falling down into the Hands of God, and exerciſing Faith, and Truſt, and Reſignation to him. Fervour is good, and ought to be loved; but Tribulation, Diſtreſs, and Coldneſs, in their Seaſon are better, becauſe they give Means and Power of exerciſing an

higher

higher Faith, a *purer* Love, and *more perfect* Reſignation to God, which are the beſt State of the Soul. And therefore the pious Soul that eyes only God, that means nothing but being his alone, can have no Stop put to its Progreſs; Light and Darkneſs equally aſſiſt him; in the Light he looks up to God, in the Darkneſs he lays hold on God, and ſo they both do him the ſame Good.

This little Sketch, ACADEMICUS, of the Nature and Progreſs of the Spirit of Prayer, may ſhew you, that a *Manual* is not ſo great a Matter as you imagined.

The beſt Inſtruction that I can give you, as helpful, or preparatory to the Spirit of Prayer, is already fully given, where we have ſet forth the original Perfection, the miſerable Fall, and the glorious Redemption of Man. It is the true Knowledge of theſe great Things that can do all for you, which human Inſtruction can do. Theſe Things muſt fill you with a Diſlike of your preſent State, drive all earthly Deſires out of your Soul, and create an earneſt Longing after your firſt Perfection. For Prayer cannot be taught you, by giving you a Book of Prayers, but by awakening in you a true Senſe and Knowledge of what you are, and what you ſhould be; that ſo you may ſee, and know, and feel, what Things you want, and are to

to pray for. For a Man does not, cannot pray for any Thing, becauſe a fine Petition for it is put into his Hands, but becauſe his *own* Condition is a *Reaſon* and *Motive* for his aſking for it. And therefore it is, that the *Spirit of Prayer*, in the Firſt Part, began with a full Diſcovery and Proof of theſe high and important Matters, at the Sight of which the World, and all that is in it, ſhrinks into nothing, and every Thing paſt, preſent, and to come, awakens in our Hearts a continual Prayer, and longing Deſire, after God, Chriſt, and Eternity.

ACAD. I perceive then, THEOPHILUS, that you direct me entirely to my *own* Prayer in my private Devotions, and not to the Uſe of any Book. But ſurely you do not take this to be right in general, that the common People, who are unlearned, and moſtly of low Underſtandings, ſhould kneel down in private, without any borrowed Form of Prayer, ſaying only what comes then into their own Heads.

THEOPH. It would be very wrong, ACADEMICUS, to condemn a Manual *as ſuch*, or to tell any People, learned or unlearned, that they ought not to make any Uſe of it. This would be quite raſh and ſilly: but it cannot be wrong, or hurtful to any body, to ſhew, that Prayer is the natural Language of the

Heart, and, as ſuch, does not want any Form, or borrowed Words. Now all that has been ſaid of Manuals of Prayers, only amounts to thus much, that they are not neceſſary, nor the moſt natural and excellent Way of praying. If they happen to be neceſſary to any Perſon, or to be his moſt excellent Way, it is becauſe the natural, real Prayer of his Heart is already engaged, loving, wiſhing, and longing after, the Things of this Life; which makes him ſo inſenſible of his ſpiritual Wants, ſo blind and dead as to the Things of God, that he cannot pray for them, but ſo far as the Words of other People are put into his Mouth. If a Man is blind, and knows it not, he may be told how to pray for Sight; if he is ſick, and knows nothing of it, he may be told how to pray for Health: ſo if the Soul is in this State, with regard to its ſpiritual Wants, a Manual may be of good Uſe to it, not ſo much by helping it to pray, as by ſhewing it, at what a miſerable Diſtance it is from thoſe Tempers which belong to Prayer.

But when a Man has had ſo much Benefit from the Goſpel, as to know his own Miſery, his Want of a Redeemer, who he is, and how he is to be found; there every Thing ſeems to be done, both to awaken and direct his Prayer, and make it a true Praying

ing in and by the Spirit. For when the Heart really pants and longs after God, its Prayer is a Praying, as moved and animated by the Spirit of God; it is the Breath or Inſpiration of God, ſtirring, moving, and opening itſelf in the Heart. For though the earthly Nature, our *old Man*, can oblige or accuſtom himſelf to take heavenly Words at certain Times into his Mouth; yet this is a certain Truth, that nothing ever did, or can have the leaſt *Deſire* or *Tendency* to aſcend to Heaven, but that which came down from Heaven; and therefore nothing in the Heart can pray, aſpire, and long after God, but the Spirit of God moving and ſtirring in it. Every Breath therefore of the true Spirit of Prayer, can be nothing elſe but the Breath of the Spirit of God, breathing, inſpiring, and moving the Heart, in all its Variety of Motions and Affections, towards God. And therefore every Time a good Deſire ſtirs in the Heart, a good Prayer goes out of it, that reaches God, as being the Fruit and Work of his Holy Spirit. When any Man, feeling his Corruption, and the Power of Sin in his Soul, looks up to God, with true Earneſtneſs of Faith, and Deſire to be delivered from it, whether with Words, or without Words, how can he pray better? What need of any Change of Thoughts, or

Words, or any Variety of Expreſſions, when the one Faith and Deſire of his Heart made known to God, and continued in, is not only all, but the moſt perfect Prayer he can make? Again; ſuppoſe the Soul in another State, feeling with Joy its offered Redeemer, and opening its Heart for the full Reception of him; if it ſtands in this State of Wiſhing and Longing for the Birth of Chriſt, how can its Prayer be in an higher Degree of Requeſt? Or if it breaks out frequently in theſe Words, *Come, Lord Jeſus, come quickly, with all thy holy Nature, Spirit, and Tempers into my Soul*; is there any Occaſion to enlarge, or alter theſe Words into another Form of Expreſſion? Can he do better, or pray more, than by continually ſtanding from Time to Time in this State of wiſhing to have Chriſt formed in him? Nay, is it not more likely, that his Heart ſhould be more divided and diſſipated by a numerous Change of Expreſſions, than by keeping united to one Expreſſion that ſets forth all that he wants? For it is the Reality, the Steadineſs, and Continuity of the Deſire, that is the Goodneſs of Prayer, and its Qualification to receive all that it wants. Our Lord ſaid to one that came to him, What wilt thou that I ſhould do unto thee? He anſwered, *Lord, that I may receive my Sight*; and

and he received it. Another ſaid, *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canſt make me clean*; and he was cleanſed. Tell me, what Learning, or fine Parts, are required to make ſuch Prayers as theſe? and yet what Wonders of Relief are recorded in Scripture, as given to ſuch ſhort Prayers as theſe! Or tell me what Bleſſing of Prayer, or Faith, or Love, may not now be obtained in the ſame Way, and with as few Words, as then was done? Every Man therefore that has any Feeling of the Weight of his Sin, or any true Deſire to be delivered from it by Chriſt, has Learning and Capacity enough to make his own Prayer. For Praying is not ſpeaking forth eloquently, but ſimply, the true Deſire of the Heart; and the Heart, ſimple and plain in good Deſires, is in the trueſt State of Preparation for all the Gifts and Graces of God. And this I muſt tell you, that the moſt ſimple Souls, that have accuſtomed themſelves to ſpeak their own Deſires and Wants to God, in ſuch ſhort, but true, Breathings of their Hearts to him, will ſoon know more of Prayer, and the Myſteries thereof, than any Perſons who have only their Knowledge from Learning, and learned Books.

ACAD. You ſeem to me, THEOPHILUS, to have much Truth in what you ſay, and

yet to be in a Way by yourſelf. I cannot take you to be with thoſe who place *all* in many and long Forms; and now I take you to be even more againſt thoſe, who made much Account of what they call a *gifted Man*; and make that to be the *true Gift* of Prayer, when any one is able to pray *extempore*, or with his own Words, for an Hour or two at a Time.

THEOPH. I have ſhewn you, ACADEMICUS, that Prayer is purely the Deſire of the Heart; that it has not the Nature of praying, but ſo far as it is the true Language of the Heart. I have ſhewn you the great Benefit that all People muſt receive from this true Prayer of the Heart. And to remove all Pretence of Want of Ability in the loweſt Sort of People to pray from their own Hearts, I have ſhewn, that the moſt *ſimple, ſhort* Petitions, when truly ſpoken by the Heart, have all the Perfection that Prayer can have.

But mark, Sir, why or when I aſcribe this Perfection to it. It is, when the Heart ſtands continually in *this State* of wiſhing to have that, which is expreſſed in ſo few Words; it is then, that I ſaid, there was no Occaſion to *enlarge*, or *alter* the Words into another or longer Form, becauſe the *Reality*, the *Steadineſs*, and the *Continuity* of the Deſire,

Desire, is the Goodness and Perfection of the Prayer. Now, Sir, let us suppose two Men; the one is frequently an *Hour*, or two, or a whole Night, on his Knees, in silent Prayer, in high Acts of Love, and Faith, and Resignation to God, not outwardly spoken by his Mouth; the other is as long a Time pouring forth the Devotion of his Heart in a Variety of fervent Expressions. May not both these Men justly appeal to me, not only as not condemning, but as asserting, the Goodness of their *Length* and *Manner* of Prayer, since I make a short simple Petition to be only *then* a good Prayer, when it proceeds from a *steady, continued* Desire of the Heart? It is not therefore *Silence*, or a *simple* Petition, or a great *Variety* of outward Expressions, that *alters* the Nature of Prayer, or makes it to be *good* or *better*, but only and solely the *Reality*, *Steadiness*, and *Continuity* of the Desire; and therefore, whether a Man offer this Desire to God in the silent Longing of the Heart, or in simple short Petitions, or in a great *Variety* of Words, is of no Consequence; but all of them are equally good, when the true and right State of the Heart is with them.

Thus you see, ACADEMICUS, that I am so far from being, as you said, in *a Way by myself*, that I am with every Man in *every Way*, whose Heart stands right towards God,

But if you would know what I would call a true and great *Gift of Prayer*, and what I moſt of all wiſh for to myſelf, it is a *good Heart, that ſtands continually inclined towards God.*

ACAD. I am not ſorry, THEOPHILUS, that I have made ſo unreaſonable an Obſervation upon what you ſaid, ſince it has occaſioned you to give ſo good and juſt an Anſwer to it. But yet this *ſilent* Prayer you ſpeak of, is what I never read nor heard any Thing of before; and it ſeems to me but like a *ceaſing* to pray; and yet you ſeem to like it in its Turn, as well as any other Way of praying.

THEOPH. All that I have ſaid of Prayer, ACADEMICUS, has been only to this End; to ſhew you its true and real Nature, whence it is to ariſe, where it is to be found, and how you are to begin, and become a true Proficient in it. If, therefore, you was at preſent to look no further, than how to put yourſelf in a State of beginning to practiſe a Prayer proceeding from your own Heart, and continuing in it, leaving all that you are further to know of Prayer, to be known in its own Time by Experience, which alone can open any true Knowledge in you; this would be much better for you, than to be aſking beforehand about ſuch Things as are not your immediate Concern.

Begin

Begin to be a Man of Prayer, in this eaſy, ſimple, and natural Manner, that has been ſet before you; and when you are faithful to this Method, you will then need no other Inſtructor in the Art of Prayer. Your own Heart thus turned to God, will want no one to tell it when it ſhould be *ſimple* in its Petitions, or *various* in its Expreſſions, or proſtrate itſelf in *Silence* before God. But this Haſtineſs of knowing Things, before they become our Concern, or belong to us, is very common. Thus a Man that has but juſt entered upon the Reformation of his Life, ſhall want to read or hear a Diſcourſe upon *Perfection*, whether it be abſolutely attainable or not; and ſhall be more eager after what he can hear of this Matter, though at ſuch a Diſtance from himſelf, than of ſuch Things as concern the next Step that he is to take in his own proper State.

You, my Friend, have already rightly taken the *firſt Step* in the ſpiritual Life; you have devoted yourſelf abſolutely to God, to live wholly to his Will, under the Light and Guidance of his Holy Spirit, intending, ſeeking nothing in this World, but ſuch a Paſſage through it, as may tend to the Glory of God, and the Recovery of your own fallen Soul. Your *next Step* is this; it is a looking to the Continuance of this firſt Reſolution, and

and Donation of yourſelf to God, to ſee that it be kept alive, that every Thing you do may be animated and directed by it, and all the Occurrences of every Day, from Morning to Night, be received by you, as becomes a Spirit that is devoted to God. Now this *ſecond Step* cannot be taken, but purely by Prayer; nothing elſe has the leaſt Power here but Prayer; I do not mean you muſt frequently read or ſay a Number of Prayers (though this in its Turn may be good and uſeful to you) but the Prayer I mean, and which you muſt practiſe, if you would take this *ſecond Step* in the ſpiritual Life, is *Prayer of the Heart*, or a Prayer of your own, proceeding from the State of your Heart, and its own Tendency to God. Of all Things therefore look to this Prayer of the Heart; conſider it as your infallible Guide to Heaven; turn from every Thing that is an Hindrance of it, that quenches or abates its Fervour; love and like nothing but that which is ſuitable to it; and let every Day begin, go on, and end, in the Spirit of it. Conſider yourſelf as always wrong, as having gone aſide, and loſt your right Path, when any *Delight*, *Deſire*, or *Trouble*, is ſuffered to live in you, that cannot be made a Part of this Prayer of the Heart to God. For nothing ſo infallibly ſhews us the true State of our Heart,

as

as that which gives us either Delight, or Trouble; for as our Delight and Trouble is, ſo is the State of our Heart: if therefore you are carried away with any Trouble or Delight, that has not an immediate Relation to your Progreſs in the Divine Life, you may be aſſured your Heart is not in its right State of Prayer to God. Look at a Man who is devoted to ſome *one Thing*, or has ſome one great worldly Matter at Heart: he ſtands turned from every Thing that has not ſome Relation to it; he has no Joy or Trouble but what ariſes from it; he has no Eyes nor Ears, but to ſee or hear ſomething about it; all elſe is a Trifle, but that which ſome way or other concerns this great Matter. You need not tell him of any Rules or Methods to keep it in his Thoughts; it goes with him into all Places and Companies; it has his firſt Thoughts in the Morning; and every Day is good or bad, as this great Matter ſeems to ſucceed or not. This may ſhew you how eaſily, how naturally, how conſtantly, our Heart will carry on its own State of Prayer, as ſoon as God is its great Object, or it is wholly given up to him, as its one great Good. This may alſo ſhew you, that the Heart cannot enter into a State of the Spirit of Prayer to God, till that which I called the firſt *Step* in the ſpiritual Life is taken,

taken, which is the taking God for its *All*, or the giving itſelf up *wholly* to God. But when this Foundation is laid, the Seed of Prayer is ſown, and the Heart is in a continual State of Tendency to God; having no other Delight or Trouble in Things of any kind, but as they help or hinder its Union with God. Therefore, ACADEMICUS, the Way to be a Man of Prayer, and be governed by its Spirit, is not to get a *Book* full of Prayers; but the beſt Help you can have from a Book, is to read one full of ſuch Truths, Inſtructions, and awakening Informations, as force you to ſee and know *who*, and *what*, and *where*, you are; that God is your *All*; and that all is *Miſery*, but a Heart and Life devoted to him. This is the beſt outward Prayer-Book you can have, as it will turn you to an inward Book, the Spirit of Prayer in your Heart, which is a continual longing Deſire of the Heart after God, his Divine Life, and Holy Spirit. When, for the Sake of this inward Prayer, you retire at any Time of the Day, never begin till you know and feel, why and wherefore you are going to pray; and let this *why* and *wherefore*, form and direct every Thing that comes from you, whether it be in Thought or Word. As you cannot but know your own State, ſo it muſt be the eaſieſt Thing in the World to look

look up to God, with ſuch Deſires as ſuit the State you are in; and praying in this Manner, whether it be in one, or more, or no Words, your Prayer will be always ſincere, and good, and highly beneficial to you. Thus praying, you can never pray in vain; but one Month in the Practice of it, will do you more Good, make a greater Change in your Soul, than twenty Years of Prayer only by Books, and Forms of other Peoples making.

No Vice can harbour in you, no Infirmity take any Root, no good Deſire can languiſh, when once your Heart is in this Method of Prayer; never beginning to pray, till you firſt ſee how Matters ſtand with you; aſking your Heart what it wants, and having nothing in your Prayers, but what the known State of your Heart puts you upon *demanding*, *ſaying*, or *offering*, unto God. A Quarter of an Hour of this Prayer, brings you out of your Cloſet a new Man; your Heart feels the Good of it; and every Return of ſuch a Prayer, gives new Life and Growth to all your Virtues, with more Certainty, than the Dew refreſhes the Herbs of the Field: whereas, overlooking this true Prayer of your own Heart, and only at certain Times taking a Prayer that you find in a Book, you have nothing to wonder at, if you are every Day praying,

and

and yet every Day ſinking further and further under all your Infirmities. For your Heart is your Life, and your Life can only be altered by that which is the real Working of your Heart. And if your Prayer is only a Form of Words, made by the Skill of other People, ſuch a Prayer can no more change you into a good Man, that an *Actor* upon the Stage, who ſpeaks kingly Language, is thereby made to be a King: whereas one Thought, or Word, or Look, towards God, proceeding from your own Heart, can never be without its proper Fruit, or fail of doing a real Good to your Soul.

Again, another great and infallible Benefit of this kind of Prayer is this; it is the only Way to be delivered from the Deceitfulneſs of our own Hearts. Our Hearts deceive us, becauſe we leave them to themſelves, are abſent from them, taken up in outward Things, in outward Rules and Forms of Living and Praying. But this Kind of Living and Praying, which takes all its Thoughts and Words only from the State of our Hearts, makes it impoſſible for us to be Strangers to ourſelves. The Strength of every Sin, the Power of every evil Temper, the moſt ſecret Working of our Hearts, the Weakneſs of any or all our Virtues, is with a Noon-day Clearneſs forced to be ſeen, as ſoon as the Heart

Heart is made our Prayer-Book, and we pray for nothing, but according to what we read and find there.

ACAD. O THEOPHILUS, you have ſhewn me, that it is almoſt as eaſy and natural a Thing to pray, as to *breathe*; and that the beſt Prayer in the World, is that which the Heart can thus eaſily ſend forth from itſelf, untaught by any thing, but its own Senſe of God and itſelf. And yet I am almoſt afraid of loving this kind of Prayer too much. I am not free from Suſpicions about it: I apprehend it to be that very *praying* by the *Spirit*, or as *moved* by the Spirit, or from a *Light within*, which is condemned as *Quakeriſm*.

THEOPH. There is but one good Prayer that you can poſſibly make; and that is a Prayer *in* and *from*, or as the Spirit of God *moves* you in it, or to it. This, this alone, is a divine Prayer; no other Prayer has, or can poſſibly have any Communion with God. Take the Matter thus: Man is a *threefold* Being; he has three Natures; he partakes of the *divine*, the *elementary*, and the *diabolical* Nature. Had he not theſe three Natures in a certain Degree in him, he could have no Communion with God, he could not enjoy the Elements, nor could the evil Spirits have the leaſt Power of Acceſs to him.

Now

Now the *aſtral elementary* Nature of Man, in this World, cannot have a Longing after the pure Deity; it cannot hunger and thirſt after the divine Image, nor deſire to be perfect as God is perfect; this is as impoſſible, as for the Beaſt of the Field to long to be Angels. Therefore Fleſh and Blood in us, can no more make a *divine* Prayer, than in any other Animal of this World.

The *diabolical* Nature which is in us, can do nothing but that which the Devils do: it can only riſe up in its *own* Pride, Envy, and Self-Exaltation; and only hate all the Goodneſs that is either in Heaven, or on Earth. And therefore it is a Truth of the greateſt Certainty, that no Man ever did, or can ſend up a divine and heavenly Prayer to God, or ſuch a Prayer as can reach God, but *in* and *by* the Spirit of God in him. Our *aſtral elementary* Man, and our proud, ſubtle, ſerpentine Nature, can read, or ſay a Prayer full of good Words and Wiſhes, as eaſily as *Satan* could uſe *Scripture-Language* in the Temptation of Chriſt; but nothing can wiſh to be like God, or to *unite* with his Goodneſs and Holineſs, but that Spirit in us, which partakes of his Divine Nature. Therefore to ridicule praying by the Spirit, or as moved by the Spirit, is ridiculing the *one only* Prayer that

that is divine, or can do us any divine Good; and to reject and oppose it, as a vain Conceit, is to quench, and suppress all that is holy, heavenly, and divine, within us. For if this Holy Spirit does not live, and move in us, and bring forth all the praying Affections of our Souls, we may as well think of reaching Heaven with our Hands, as with our Prayers.

ACAD. I know not, THEOPHILUS, how to deny any Thing that you have here said: yet this Account seems to make no Distinction between *our own good* Spirit, and the Holy Spirit of God. I took the Inspirations and Graces of the Holy Spirit, to be something that came into us from *without*, and to be as *distinct* from our own good Spirit, as God is distinct from the Creature.

THEOPH. The Holy Spirit of God is as necessary to our divine Life, or the Life of Grace, as the *Air* of this World is necessary to our animal Life; and is as *distinct* from us, and as much *without* us, as the *Air* of this World is *distinct* from, and *without*, the Creatures that live in it. And yet *our own* good Spirit, is the *very Spirit* of God, moving and stirring in us. No Animal can unite with, or breathe the Air of this World, till it has first the Air of this World brought forth, as the *true Birth* of its own Life in itself; this is its only Capacity to

of all the properties and ſenſibilities of Nature; and alſo that Nature, in itſelf, is that working life of various properties and ſenſibilities, which *want* to be made happy, which *reach* after ſomething that they are not, and have not, and which cannot be happy or fulfilled, till ſomething of an higher nature than themſelves be united with them; that is, the working of Nature muſt be in want, in pain, and diſſatisfaction, till God (the bleſſing and fulfilling of Nature) is manifeſted, found, and enjoyed in it.

Now ſuppoſe you knew no more of what God is in himſelf, diſtinct from Nature, and what Nature is as thus diſtinguiſhed from God, than is already opened in you, you would know enough to be a key to all that which *Jacob Behmen* ſpeaks of God, and of Nature; and enough alſo to ſhow you, how to co-operate with God and Nature, in bringing forth a New Birth of the Divine Life within you. For as ſoon as you know, that Nature in itſelf is only a working life of various ſenſibilities, which wants ſomething diſtinct from itſelf, and higher than itſelf, to make it happy, then you have a ſelf-evident certainty of theſe following truths: *Firſt*, That God, conſidered as in himſelf, is the bleſſing, the ſatisfaction, the Heaven, and happineſs, of all and every ſenſibility of Nature.

ture. *Secondly*, That therefore, as the Gospel teaches, only the *Word*, the *Light*, the Son of God, or *Jesus Christ*, can redeem fallen Nature, restore it to its first state of blessedness in God. *Thirdly*, That therefore, as the Gospel teaches, you have but *one thing* to do, and *that* one thing absolutely necessary to be done; *viz.* to *deny yourself*; that is, to turn this fallen Nature from itself, from all its own wills and workings in the vanity of this life, to give up itself in faith in hunger and thirst after that Light, *Word*, Son, or *Jesus Christ* of God, who is the fulness, the satisfaction, the joy, and blessedness, of all Nature; who alone can turn every working and sensibility of Nature into a participation of heavenly satisfaction and joy. Now what can you desire, or need to know of God, of Nature, and the mystery of Christian Redemption, more than this? And yet all this is a self-evident knowledge, born within you as soon as you turn to it.

ACADEMICUS. O! Sir, you quite transport me with this short, easy, and yet full explication of so great a matter, which has often perplexed me. But now I shall never be at a loss, how to understand the distinction between God and Nature, and also the absolute necessity of it; which, when

Adam; *the Immanuel; the God within every Man; the Light that lighteth every Man that cometh into the World. Secondly,* That the Holy Spirit of God, the Breath of Eternity, hath alſo *its Seed* of Life in my Soul; for where the *Word,* or *Son* of God is, there is the Spirit of God in the *ſame State*; if one is only a *Seed* of Life, a Spark of Heaven, the other is ſo alſo; and theſe two, thus conſidered, are the glorious *Pearl* of Eternity, hidden in every Man's Soul, and ſo often ſpoken of before. And thus we underſtand, how the Whole of our Redemption (according to the plain Language of Scripture) is *inwardly*, and *outwardly*, ſolely the Work of the Light and Spirit of God; a Kingdom of God both *within* and *without* us, and to which we do not, cannot live, but ſo far as we are inſpired, moved, and led, by the Spirit of God. Earneſtly therefore to pray, humbly to hope, and faithfully to expect, to be *continually* inſpired and animated by the Holy Spirit of God, has no more of *Vanity, Fanaticiſm,* or *enthuſiaſtic* Wildneſs in it, than to hope and pray, to act in every Thing from and by a *good Spirit*. For as ſure as the Lip of Truth hath told us, that there is but *One that is good*; ſo ſure it is, that not a *Spark* of Goodneſs, nor a *Breath* of Piety, can be in any Creature, either in Heaven, or on Earth, but

but by that Divine Spirit, which is the *Breath* of God, breathed from himſelf into the Creature. The Matter is not about *Appearances* of Goodneſs, *Forms* of Virtue, *Rules* of Religion, or a *prudential Piety*, ſuited to Time, and Place, and Character; all theſe are Degrees of Goodneſs that our old Man can as eaſily trade in, as in any other Matters of this World. But ſo much as we have of an *heavenly* and *divine* Goodneſs, or of a Goodneſs that *belongs* to Heaven, and has the Nature of Heaven in it, ſo much we muſt have of a *divine Inſpiration* in us. For as nothing can fall to the Earth, but becauſe it has the Nature of the Earth in it; ſo it is a Truth of the utmoſt Certainty, that nothing can aſcend towards Heaven, or have the leaſt Power to unite with it, but that very Spirit which came down from Heaven, and has the Nature of Heaven in it. This Truth therefore, that the Kingdom of God is within us, that its Light is ſolely the *Lamb* of God, its Spirit ſolely the Spirit of God, ſtands upon a Rock, againſt which all Attempts are in vain. All that I now further deſire to know, is only this: how I may keep free from all Deluſions in this Matter, and not take my own natural Abilities, Tempers, and Paſſions, or the Suggeſtions of evil Spirits, to be the Working of the Spirit of God in me.

me. Pray, Sir, tell me, how I ſhall ſafely know when, and how far, I am led and governed by the Spirit of God?

THEOPH. You may know this, ACADEMICUS, juſt as you know, when you are governed by the Spirit of Wrath, Envy, Guile, Craft, or Covetouſneſs. Every Man knows this of himſelf, as eaſily, and as certainly, as he knows when he is hungry, pleaſed, or diſpleaſed. Now it is the ſame Thing with regard to the Spirit of God; the Knowledge of it is as perceptible in yourſelf, and liable to no more Deluſion. For the Spirit of God is more diſtinguiſhable from all other Spirits and Tempers, than any of your natural Affections or Tempers are from one another; as I will here plainly ſhew you.

" God is unwearied *Patience*; a *Meekneſs* " that cannot be provoked; he is an ever en- " during *Mercifulneſs*; he is unmixed *Good-* " *neſs*, impartial, univerſal *Love*; his De- " light is in the Communication of himſelf, " his own Happineſs, to every thing, ac- " cording to its Capacity. He does every " thing that is good, righteous, and lovely, " for its own ſake, becauſe it is good, righ- " teous, and lovely. He is the *Good*, from " which nothing but Good cometh; and re- " ſiſteth all Evil, *only* with Goodneſs." This, Sir, is the *Nature* and *Spirit* of God; and here

here you have your *infallible* Proof, whether you are moved, and led by the Spirit of God. Here is a Proof that can never fail you; is always at hand; and is liable to no Miſtake or Deluſion. If it be the earneſt Deſire and Longing of your Heart, to be *merciful*, as he is merciful; to be full of his *unwearied Patience*, to dwell in his *unalterable Meekneſs*; if you long to be like him in *univerſal, impartial* Love; if you deſire to communicate *every Good*, to every Creature that you are able; if you love and practiſe every Thing that is good, righteous, and lovely, for its *own ſake*, becauſe it is good, righteous, and lovely; and reſiſt no Evil, but with *Goodneſs*; then you have the utmoſt Certainty, that the Spirit of God liveth, dwelleth, and governeth in you. Now all theſe Tempers are as knowable to every Man, as his own Love and Hatred; and therefore no Man can be deceived as to the Poſſeſſion of them, but he that chooſes to deceive himſelf. Now if you want any of theſe Tempers, if the *whole Bent* of your Heart and Mind is not ſet upon them, all Pretences to an *immediate Inſpiration*, and *continual* Operation of the Spirit of God in our Soul, are vain and groundleſs. For the Spirit of God is *that* which I have here deſcribed; and where his Spirit dwells and governs,

verns, there all these Tempers are brought forth, or springing up, as the certain Fruits of it. What Room, therefore, ACADEMICUS, for so much Uncertainty, or Fear of Delusion, in this Matter? Keep but within the Bounds here set you; call nothing a *Proof* of the Spirit or Work of God in your Soul, but *these Tempers*, and the Works which they produce; and then, but not till then, you may safely, and infallibly say, with St. *John*, *Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.*

ACAD. Indeed, THEOPHILUS, you have given me a short, but very full and satisfactory Answer to my Question. I now perceive, that, as a spiritual Man, or one devoted to the Spirit of God, I am not to look after any *Extraordinaries*, any new Openings, Illuminations, Visions, or Voices, inward or outward, from God, as *Proofs* of the Spirit of God dwelling and working in me; but that all my Proof and Security of being governed by the Spirit of God, is to be grounded on other Matters: that the boundless Humility and Resignation of the Holy Jesus; the unwearied Patience, the unalterable Meekness, the impartial, universal Love of God, manifested in my Soul; are its only Proofs, that God is in me of a Truth. Thus far all is right and good.

But

But yet, Sir, ſurely it muſt be ſaid with Truth, that the Spirit of God often diſcovers itſelf, and operates in good Souls in very extraordinary Ways, in uncommon Illuminations, and Openings of divine Light and Knowledge, in the Revelation of Myſteries, in ſtrong Impulſes and Sallies of a wonderful Zeal, full of the higheſt Gifts and Graces of God; and that theſe have frequently been God's gracious Methods of awakening a ſinful World.

THEOPH. What you ſay, ACADEMICUS, is very true; and almoſt every Age of the Church is a ſufficient Proof of it. By the Goodneſs of God, the Church has always had its *extraordinary Perſons*, highly gifted from above, made burning and ſhining Lights, and carried into as uncommon Ways of Life, by the ſame Spirit, and for the ſame Ends, as *John* the *Baptiſt* was; and as different from common Chriſtians, as he was from the common *Jews*. But, my Friend, theſe extraordinary Operations of God's Holy Spirit, and the Wonders of his Gifts and Graces, ſhewing themſelves at certain Times, and upon certain Perſons, through all the Ages of the Church, are not Matters of common Inſtruction; they belong not to our Subject; it would be Ignorance and Vanity in me, to pretend to let you into

the Secret of them; it would be the ſame Thing in you, to think yourſelf ready for it.

Would you know the *Sublime*, the *Exalted*, the *Angelic*, in the Chriſtian Life, ſee what the Son of God ſaith; *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, with all thy Soul, with all thy Mind, and with all thy Strength; and thy Neighbour as thyſelf. On theſe two*, ſaith he, *hang all the Law and the Prophets.* And without theſe *two Things*, no good Light ever can ariſe, or enter into your Soul. Take all the Sciences, ſhine in all the Accompliſhments of the lettered World, they will only lead you from one vain Paſſion to another: every Thing you ſend out from within you will be ſelfiſh, vain, and bad; every Thing you ſee or receive from without, will be received with a bad Spirit; till *theſe two* heavenly Tempers have overcome the *natural Perverſeneſs* of fallen Nature. Till then, nothing *pure* can proceed from within, nor any Thing be received in *Purity* from without.

Think yourſelf therefore unfit, incapable of judging rightly, or acting virtuouſly, till theſe two Tempers have the Government of your Heart. Then every Truth will meet you; no hurtful Error can get Entrance into your Heart; you will neither deceive, nor be deceived; but will have a better

Knowledge

Knowledge of all divine Matters, than all the human Learning in the World can help you to.

Would you know what it is to love God with all your Heart and Soul, *&c.* you need only look back to that, which has been ſaid of the *Nature* and *Spirit* of God *. For when with all your *Heart* and *Soul* you love, and long to have, that *Nature* and *Spirit*, to be wholly united to it, poſſeſſed and governed by it, then you love God with all your Heart and Soul, *&c.* And then you are firſt capable of loving yourſelf and your Neighbour rightly. For ſo much as you have of the Divine Nature and Spirit in you, juſt ſo much Power have you of loving yourſelf and your Neighbour aright; that is, of loving only and equally, *that* in yourſelf and your Neighbour, which the Deity *only* and *equally* loves, both in you, and him. But it is Time to part, when we have only told our ſilent Friend, HUMANUS, that if we live to meet again, we ſhall, with all our Hearts, receive him as a Speaker amongſt us. — And ſo, Gentlemen, once more, Adieu.

* Pages 195, 196.

FINIS.

THE

WAY

TO

DIVINE KNOWLEDGE:

BEING SEVERAL

DIALOGUES

BETWEEN

HUMANUS, ACADEMICUS, RUSTICUS, and THEOPHILUS;

AS preparatory to a new Edition of the Works of JACOB BEHMEN, and the right Uſe of them.

By *WILLIAM LAW*, M.A.

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M,DCC,LXXVIII.

THE

FIRST DIALOGUE.

HUMANUS, ACADEMICUS, RUSTICUS, and THEOPHILUS.

HUMANUS. O! THEOPHILUS, I muſt yield; and it is with great pleaſure that I now enter into converſation with you. You have taken from me all power of cavilling and diſputing. I have no opinions that I chuſe to maintain; but the utmoſt deſire of entering further into this field of light, which you have ſo clearly opened to my view. I ſhall not trouble you with the relation of what has paſſed in my ſoul; nor what ſtruggles I have had with that variety of heatheniſh notions, which have had their turn in my mind. It is better to tell you, that they are dead and buried, or rather conſumed to nothing by that new light, which you have

opened in ſo many great points, that I was quite a ſtranger to before. To reject all that you have ſaid concerning the fall of angels, the original of this world, the creation and fall of man, and the neceſſity of a redemption, as great as that of the Goſpel, is impoſſible; nothing can do it, or ſtand out againſt it, but the moſt wilful and blind obſtinacy.

But theſe great points cannot be received in any true degree, without ſeeing the vain contention of all thoſe, who either defend or oppoſe the Goſpel, without any true and real knowledge of them. The one contend for, and the other oppoſe, not the Goſpel, but a ſyſtem of empty words and hiſtorical facts, branched into forms and modes of dividing one church from another: whereas the Goſpel is no hiſtory of any abſent, diſtant, or foreign thing; but is a manifeſtation of an eſſential, inherent, real life and death in every ſon of Adam; grounded on the certainty of his firſt Angelical Nature; on the certainty of his real fall from that nature, into an animal earthly life of impure beſtial fleſh and blood; and on the certainty of an inward redemption from his fallen life, by the Divine Nature given again into him. Theſe three great points, with all the doctrines, duties, and conſequences, that are

eſſentially

eſſentially contained in, or flow from them, are the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt, to which, by your means, I am become a convert.

I am now, dear THEOPHILUS, ſtrongly drawn two different ways. Firſt, I am all hunger and thirſt after this new light, a glimpſe of which has already raiſed me, as it were, from the dead; and I am in the utmoſt impatience to hear more and more of this Divine philoſophy, which, I ſo plainly ſee, opens all the myſteries both of nature and grace, from the beginning to the end of time. What I have heard from you, when I was obliged to be ſilent, and what I have ſince found and felt by much reading the Appeal, and that Dialogue, obliges me to ſpeak in this ardent manner. They have awakened ſomething in me which I never felt before, ſomething much deeper than my reaſon, and over which I have no power; it glows in my ſoul, like a fire, or hunger, which nothing can ſatisfy, but a further view of thoſe great truths, which I this day expect from your opening to us the myſteries of heaven revealed to that wonderful man, Jacob Behmen.

On the other hand, I find in myſelf a vehement impulſe to turn preacher amongſt my former infidel brethren; which impulſe I know not how to reſiſt: for being juſt

converted myſelf, I ſeem to know, and feel the *true place*, from whence converſion is to ariſe in others; and by the reluctance which I have felt in my paſſage from one ſide to the other, I ſeem alſo to know the *true ground* on which infidelity ſupports itſelf. And he only is able to declare with ſpirit and power any truths, or bear a faithful teſtimony of the reality of them, who preaches nothing but what he has firſt ſeen, and felt, and found to be true, by a living ſenſibility and true experience of their reality and power in his own ſoul. All other preaching, whether from art, hearſay, books, or education, is, at beſt, but playing with words, and mere trifling with ſacred things. Being thus divided in myſelf, I hope to have your direction.

THEOPHILUS. Dear HUMANUS, my heart embraces you with great joy, and I am much pleaſed with what you ſay of yourſelf. This *hunger* of your ſoul is all that I wiſh for; it is the *fire* of God, the *opening* of eternity, the *beginning* of your redemption, the *awakener* of the Angelic Life, the *root* of an omnipotent faith, and the *true ſeeker* of all that is loſt. For all theſe things, and much more, are the bleſſed powers which will ſoon break forth, and ſhew themſelves to be the true workings of this

Celeſtial

Celeſtial Fire, that has begun to glow within you.

Your buſineſs is now to give way to this heavenly working of the Spirit of God in your ſoul; and turn from every thing either within you, or without you, that may hinder the further awakening of all that is holy and heavenly within you. For within you is that heavenly Angel that died in paradiſe; and died no other death, than that of being hid awhile from your ſight and ſenſibility.

For be aſſured of this, as a certain truth, that corrupt, fallen, and earthly, as human nature is, there is, nevertheleſs, in the ſoul of every man, the fire, and light, and love of God, though lodged in a ſtate of hiddenneſs, inactivity, and death, till ſomething or other, human or divine, Moſes and the Prophets, Chriſt or his Apoſtles, diſcover its life within us.

For the ſoul of every man is the Breath and Life of the Triune God, and, as ſuch, a partaker of the Divine Nature; but all this Divinity is unfelt, becauſe overpowered by the workings of fleſh and blood, till ſuch time as diſtreſs, or grace, or both, give fleſh and blood a ſhock, open the long ſhut-up eyes, and force a man to find ſomething in himſelf, that ſenſe and reaſon, whilſt at quiet, were not aware of. Wonder

not, therefore, at this conflict in your ſoul; that you are eager after more light, and impatient to communicate that which you have. For you muſt be thus driven; and both theſe deſires are only two witneſſes to this truth, that a Heaven-born Spirit is come to life in you.

Only remember this: look well to the ground on which you ſtand; keep a watchful eye upon every working of nature; and take care, that nothing human, earthly, private, or ſelfiſh, mix with this Heavenly Fire: that is, ſee that your mind be *free*, *univerſal*, *impartial*, without regard to here or there, this or that, but loving all Goodneſs, practiſing every Virtue, for itſelf, on its own account, becauſe it is ſo much of God; neither coveting light, nor longing to communicate it to others, but merely and ſolely for this reaſon, that the will of God may be done, and the goodneſs of God brought to life, both in you and them. For there is no goodneſs but God's; and his goodneſs is not alive, or fruitful in you, but ſo far, and in ſuch a degree, as the good that you mean, and do, is done in and by that Spirit, by which God himſelf is good. For as there is but one that is good, ſo there is and can be but one goodneſs. And therefore it is, that we are called, not to a human, worldly, prudential,

prudential, partial goodneſs, ſuitable to our ſelfiſh reaſon and natural tempers, but to *be perfect, as our Father in heaven is perfect.* And the full reaſon is expreſſed in the words; for if our Father is in heaven, we muſt be there too in ſpirit and life, or we are not his children; if heaven is that for which we are made, and that which we have loſt, it is not any human goodneſs, but a heavenly birth and Spirit of God's own goodneſs, working in us as it does in God, that can make us the heavenly children of our Father in heaven. You muſt love the light of God, as God loves it; you muſt deſire that others may enjoy it, as God deſires it. Now God is a free, univerſal, impartial love, loving and doing every kind of good, for its own ſake, becauſe that is the higheſt and moſt perfect working of life; and becauſe every thing elſe but goodneſs for its own ſake, is imperfect, and a degree of evil, miſery, and death. And no creature can come out of its imperfection, miſery, and death, but by the pure, free, unmixt goodneſs of God being born in it. Though you had outwardly all virtues, and ſeemed doing all that the ſaints of God have done; yet, unleſs the *ſame ſpirit*, by which God himſelf is good, brought forth your goodneſs, all would be only an earthly labour,

bour, that could have no communication with heaven.

Therefore, my friend, ſet out right, and be aſſured of this truth, that *nature*, and *ſelf*, and every *particular view*, muſt be totally renounced; or elſe, be your zeal what it will, ever ſo pleaſing to yourſelf, or aſtoniſhing to the world, you are not working with God.

Here now you have the teſt of truth, by which you may always know, whether it be the Spirit of God, and the love of God, that drives you. If your zeal is after this *pure*, *free*, *univerſal* goodneſs of God, then of a truth the Spirit of God breatheth in you; but if you feel not the love of this pure, free, univerſal goodneſs, and yet think that you love God, you deceive yourſelf; for there is no other true love of God, but the loving *that*, which God is.

But if you pleaſe, HUMANUS, tell me, in what manner you would attempt to make converts to Chriſtianity.

HUMANUS. I would not take the method generally practiſed by the modern defenders of Chriſtianity. I would not attempt to ſhew, from *reaſon* and *antiquity*, the neceſſity and reaſonableneſs of a Divine Revelation in general, or of the *Moſaic* and Chriſtian in particular: nor enlarge upon the arguments

arguments for the credibility of the Gospel-History, the reasonableness of its creeds, institutions, and usages; or the duty of man to receive things above, but not contrary to, his reason. I would avoid all this, because it is wandering from the true point in question, and only helping the Deist to oppose the Gospel with a shew of argument, which he must necessarily want, was the Gospel left to stand upon its own bottom.

And, on the other hand, should the Deist yield up such a cause as this, and change sides; he could only be said to have changed his opinion about facts, without any more alteration or amendment of his state in God, than if he had only altered his opinion about things in dispute amongst the antient Philosophers.

For since the *fall* of man, implying a real change from his first state, or a total death to his first created life, since the necessity of a new birth of that lost life, by the life of God again restored to or born in the soul, are *two points* quite overlooked by those who defend the truth and reasonableness of the Christian scheme; it may truly be said, that the *only ground*, and *whole nature* of the Gospel, is quite dropt, and given up by those who thus defend it.

For

For the Goſpel has but *one ground*, or reaſon, and that is the fall of man; it has but *one nature*, and that is to help man again to *all* that he had loſt.

How unreaſonable would it be, to offer the Chriſtian redemption to glorious angels in heaven? Could any thing be more inconſiſtent with their heavenly, unfallen ſtate? Yet juſt ſo unreaſonable would it be to offer it to man unfallen from his firſt created ſtate. For man ſtanding in that firſt perfection of life, which God breathed into him, and in that very outward ſtate, or world, into which God himſelf brought him, wants no more redemption, than the moſt glorious angels do; and to preach to ſuch a man, in order to be reconciled to God, the neceſſity of dying to himſelf and the world he is in, would be as contrary to all ſenſe and reaſon, as to preach to angels the neceſſity of dying to themſelves, their Divine Life, and the kingdom of heaven, for which God had created them.

Thus does it appear, that the fall of man into the life of this earthly world, is the ſole ground of his wanting the redemption which the Goſpel offers.

Hence it is, that the Goſpel has only one ſimple propoſal of certain life, or certain death, to man; of life, if he will take the means

means of entering into the kingdom of God; of death, if he chuſes to take up his reſt in the kingdom of this world. This is the ſimple nature, and ſole drift of the Goſpel: it means no more, than making known to man, that this world, and the life of it, is his fall and ſeparation from God and happineſs, both here and hereafter; and that to be ſaved or reſtored to God and happineſs, can only be obtained, by renouncing all love and adherence to the things of this world. Look at all the precepts, threatenings, and doctrines of the Goſpel, they mean nothing, but to drive all earthly-mindedneſs and carnal affections out of the ſoul; to call man from the life, ſpirit, and goods of this world, to a life of hope, and faith, and truſt, and love and deſire of a new birth from heaven.

To embrace the Goſpel, is to enter with all our hearts into its terms of dying to all that is earthly, both within us, and without us; and, on the other hand, to place our faith, and hope, and truſt, and ſatisfaction in the things of this world, is to reject the Goſpel with our whole heart, ſpirit, and ſtrength, as much as any infidel can do, notwithſtanding we make ever ſo many verbal aſſents and conſents to every thing that is recorded in the New-Teſtament.

This

This, therefore, is the one true eſſential diſtinction between the Chriſtian and the infidel: the infidel is a man of this world, wholly devoted to it, his hope and faith are ſet upon it; for where our heart is, there, and there only is our hope and faith: he has only ſuch virtue, ſuch goodneſs, and ſuch a religion, as entirely ſuits with the intereſts of fleſh and blood, and keeps the ſoul happy in the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eye, and the pride of life: this, and this alone, is *infidelity*; a *total ſeparation* from God, and a removal of all faith and hope from him, into the life of this world. It matters not, whether this infidel be a profeſſor of the Goſpel, a diſciple of Zoroaſter, a follower of Plato, a Jew, a Turk, or an oppoſer of the Goſpel-hiſtory: this difference of opinions or profeſſions alters not the matter; it is the love of the world inſtead of God, that conſtitutes the *whole nature* of the infidel.

On the other hand, the Chriſtian renounces the world, as his horrid priſon; he dies to the will of fleſh and blood, becauſe it is darkneſs, corruption, and ſeparation from God; he turns from all that is earthly, animal, and temporal, and ſtands in a continual tendency of faith, and hope, and prayer to God, to have a better nature,

a better

a better life and ſpirit, born again into him from above.

Where this faith is, there is the Chriſtian, the new creature in Chriſt, born of the Word and Spirit of God; neither time nor place, nor any outward condition of birth and life, can hinder his entrance into the kingdom of God.

But where this faith is not, there is the *true complete* infidel, the man of the earth, the unredeemed, the rejector of the Goſpel, the ſon of perdition, that is *dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, without Chriſt, an alien from the commonwealth of Iſrael, a ſtranger to the covenants of promiſe, having no hope, and without God in the world.*

Here, therefore, I fix my true ground of converting men to Chriſtianity; and how miſerably, may I ſay, do they err, who place Chriſtianity and infidelity in any thing elſe, but in the heart either devoted to this world, or devoted to God!

He therefore that opens a field of controverſy to the Deiſt, about revelation in general, or the hiſtory of facts, creeds, and doctrines of churches, not only leads him from the merits of the Goſpel, but brings him into a field of battle, where he may ſtand his ground as long as he pleaſes. This I can truly ſay from my own experience, who have been twenty years in this duſt

of

of debate, and have always found, that the more books there were written in *this way* of defending the Goſpel, the more I was furniſhed with new objections to it, and the leſs apprehenſive of any danger from my not receiving it.

For I had frequently a conſciouſneſs riſing up within me, that the debate was equally vain on both ſides, doing no more real good to the one than to the other; not being able to imagine, that a ſet of ſcholaſtic, logical opinions about hiſtory, facts, doctrines, and inſtitutions of the church, or a ſet off logical objections againſt them, were of any ſignificancy towards making the ſoul of man either an eternal angel of heaven, or an eternal devil of hell. And therefore it was, that I was often tempted rather to think, there was neither heaven nor hell, than to believe, that ſuch a variety of churches and ſyſtems of opinion, all condemning, and all condemned by one another, were to find the heaven of God opened to receive them, but he who was equally led by opinion to reject them all, was doomed to hell. But you, ſir, (and how can I enough thank you for it!) have put a full end to all this vain ſtrife of opinions floating in the brain: you have diſperſed the clouds that ſurrounded my bewildered mind; you have brought me home to myſelf, where I find heaven and hell,

hell, life and death, ſalvation and damnation, at ſtrife within me; you have ſhewn me the infinite worth of Chriſtianity, and the dreadful nature of infidelity, not by helping me to a new opinion for my *reaſon* to maintain, but by proving to me this great and deciſive truth, that Chriſtianity is neither more nor leſs, than "the goodneſs of the "Divine Life, Light, and Love, living and "working in the ſoul;" and that infidelity, in its whole nature, is purely and ſolely "the heart of man living in, governed by, "and contented with, the evil workings of "his earthly life, ſpirit, and nature."

This is the infidelity that you have forced me to fly from, and renounce; and *that* is the Chriſtianity, to which I am converted with all the ſtrength of my heart and ſpirit. Away then with all the fictions and workings of reaſon, either for, or againſt Chriſtianity! they are only the wanton ſport of the mind, whilſt ignorant of God, and inſenſible of its own nature and condition. Death and life are the only things in queſtion: *life* is God, living and working in the ſoul; *death* is the ſoul living and working according to the ſenſe and reaſon of beſtial fleſh and blood. Both this life, and this death, are of their own growth, growing from their own ſeed within us; not as buſy reaſon talks

or directs, but as our heart turns either to the one or the other.

But, dear THEOPHILUS, I must now tell you, that I want to make haste in this new road you have put me in. Time is short; I am afraid of leaving the world, before I have left all worldly tempers; and before the first holy and heavenly birth be quickened, and brought to life in me.

An angel my first father was created; and, therefore, nothing but the angel belongs to man, and nothing but the angel can enter into heaven. Angelic goodness, therefore, is the one thing that man must look up to God for, because it is the one goodness that he has lost. Every thing else, flesh and blood, earth and all earthly tempers, every thing that had its rise from the fall of Adam, must be renounced, and given up to death, that the first angelic Glory of the Life of God in Man may be again found in him.

THEOPHILUS. Indeed, HUMANUS, you have made great haste already; for all the haste that we can make, consists in a total dying to all the tempers and passions which we have received from the spirit of this world, by our fall into it. And the more watchfully, earnestly, and constantly, we do this, the more haste we make to our lost country, and heavenly glory.

It is no extravagance, or overſtraining the matter, when we ſay, that our goodneſs muſt be angelic; for no goodneſs leſs than that, can be divine and heavenly, or help us to the life of heaven. It is often ſaid, that we are poor, infirm men, and not angels; and therefore muſt be content with the poverty and infirmity of human virtues. That we are poor, infirm men, is undeniable; but this is the one infallible reaſon, why a virtue that is according to our nature, or of its own growth, can do us no good. We were not created poor and infirm men by God, but have loſt him, are ſeparated from him; full of miſery, becauſe we have changed our firſt ſtate, and brought all this poverty, corruption, and infirmity, upon ourſelves. And therefore, as this infirmity is from ourſelves, ſo we muſt intend nothing leſs than, or ſhort of the total removal of it; nor think that we have our proper goodneſs, til! we ſtand in that degree of it, in which God created us. For, be aſſured of this great truth, that nothing in us can be the delight of God, but that very creature which he created: all, therefore, muſt be parted with, that God hath not created and brought to life in us. And no goodneſs but that of an angel, can overcome the evil that is in us; or do the will of God on earth, as it is done in heaven,

which is the only goodneſs in and for which God created us.

ACADEMICUS. Give me leave, THEOPHILUS, to ſay, that I ſhould think it better, not to inſiſt ſo much upon the word *angelic*, when you ſpeak of the goodneſs that ought to be ours; for it ſeems to me too liable to objection. We have not the high faculties, and exalted powers of angels; and therefore, our goodneſs cannot riſe up to an equality with theirs.

RUSTICUS. Give me leave alſo, ACADEMICUS, to ſay, that if your learning did not lead you to mind words more than things, you could not have fallen into this critical ſcruple. For our call to angelic goodneſs, does not ſuppoſe or require any high ſtretch, or refined elevation, of our intellectual faculties and powers: a *ſhepherd* watching over his flock, a poor *ſlave* digging in the mines, may each of them, though ſo employed to the end of their lives, ſtand before God in a degree of goodneſs truly angelic. On the other hand, you may ſpend all your time in high ſpeculations, writing and preaching upon Chriſtian perfection, compoſing ſeraphic hymns of heavenly matters, with a ſtrength of thought and genius that delights both yourſelf and others, and yet, ſo doing to the day of your death, have only a goodneſs like that

that of eating and drinking that which moſt pleaſes your palate.

Would you know the true nature of angelic goodneſs, ſee how the Spirit of Chriſt ſpeaks: *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, ſoul, and ſtrength, and thy neighbour as thyſelf. I came into the world, not to do my own will, not to ſeek my own glory or honour, not to have a kingdom in this world, but to promote the kingdom of God, and do the will of my Father in heaven. My meat and drink is to do the will of him that ſent me. When thou makeſt a feaſt, call not thy rich friends and acquaintance, but the poor, the lame, and blind, &c. Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory and praiſe of God.* Thus ſpeaks the Spirit of Chriſt; and he that in this Spirit thus lives, is an angel, whether he be in heaven, or incloſed in fleſh and blood. And all of us are in the way of attaining to this angelic goodneſs, as ſoon as we hate the ſelfiſh tempers of our own earthly life, and earneſtly long, in the Spirit of Prayer, to have the Life of God brought forth in us. Now this goodneſs we muſt have, or we have none at all; for there is but one *God*, one *good*, and one *goodneſs*; and it is rightly called angelic, becauſe nothing is capable of it, but the heavenly angelic nature; nor can it have

any exiſtence in man, till the workings of our earthly nature are overcome, and brought into ſubjection to *that* Spirit, which is not of man, but from heaven. For fleſh and blood, in all its workings, can work only for itſelf; darkneſs can only be dark, it has no other nature; coldneſs can only be cold; earth can only be earthly; and the works of light can only proceed from light. Fleſh and blood, or that life which is only from the ſtars and elements of this world, can only work as the ſtars and elements work, only for time, and a corruptible life; it can only be beſtial, and ſerve the ends of a beſtial life; it is inſenſible and incapable of Divine Virtue; and is, and can be, of no higher a nature in a man, than in a beaſt, and muſt have the ſame end in both. It is quite incapable of entering into the kingdom of God; and only for this reaſon, becauſe it is abſolutely incapable of having any true and heavenly goodneſs. It has then only its proper goodneſs, when it has loſt its power of acting, and is governed by a Spirit ſuperior to it; whilſt it lives and rules, it can only live to itſelf; is nothing but an earthly own will, own love, own honour, own intereſt; never riſing higher, doing better, or coming any nearer to goodneſs, than its own pride or covetouſneſs, envy or wrath, can carry it.

For

For theſe tempers, with all their leſſer ſubdiviſions, are the *atmoſphere* that ſets bounds to the breath of the earthly life; they are eſſential to it, and as inſeparable from it, as hardneſs and darkneſs are inſeparable from a rock of ſtone. So long as the ſtony rock laſts, ſo long is it hard and dark: and ſo long as earthly fleſh and blood lives and acts, it can only live and act for itſelf; it can ſeek, love, like, or do no manner of thing, but as its own will, own love, own intereſt, is ſome way or other felt and found in it. Would you know the true ground and reaſon of this? It is becauſe no life can go out of, or further than itſelf; nor can it will any thing, but what its own life is. This is abſolutely true of every life, whether it be divine, earthly, or helliſh; it can ſeek, love, and delight in nothing, but that which is according to its own life.

See here, ACADEMICUS, the folly of your quarrelling with the word *angelic*; ſince the thing itſelf, angelic goodneſs, is abſolutely neceſſary; it is the goodneſs of our firſt creation, and muſt be the goodneſs of our redemption. The falling from it has brought forth all the evils that we are ſurrounded with; and nothing can deliver us from the death of our fallen ſtate, but a true and full reſurrection of all that purity and goodneſs,

which was living in the firſt creation of man. To be content with our infirmities, is to be content with our ſeparation from God; and not to aſpire after the one angelic goodneſs, is to be *carnally-minded*, which we are told, *is death*, that is, death to the one Divine Life.

A virtue that is only according to the ſtate of this earthly life, is a virtue of art and human contrivance, a fiction of behaviour, modelled according to rule or cuſtom, or education, that can go no deeper, nor riſe higher, nor reach further, than the ſenſe, and reaſon, and intereſts of fleſh and blood, can carry it. But this can have no communication with God and heaven, becauſe it is not born of them; but is a lower, ſeparate ſtate of life, that at beſt can only bring forth a civility of outward manners, little better than ſuch a new birth as may be had from a dancing-maſter. But the goodneſs which we want, and which we were created to have, is the one holy bleſſed Life of God, and Chriſt, and Heaven, living in the ſoul. For, from eternity to eternity, there never was, nor ever can be, any other heavenly goodneſs in any creature, but the Life, and Spirit, and Word of God, ſpeaking, living, and breathing in it.

Bid

Bid the anatomiſt who can ſkilfully diſſect an human body, who can tell you the names, nature, and offices of moſt of its parts, who can ſhew you how they all conſpire to give life, ſtrength, and motion, to the living machine; bid him, I ſay, put life into the dead carcaſe.

Now, learned reaſon, when pretending to be a maſter of morality, is juſt as powerful as this very anatomiſt. It can ſkilfully diſſect a dead ſyſtem of morality, can ſeparate all its parts, tell you the names, nature, diſtinctions, and connections, of moſt kinds of good and evil: but when this is done, learned reaſon, with all its dictates, diſtinctions, and definitions, can do juſt as much good to the ſoul that has loſt its goodneſs, as the anatomiſt can do to the carcaſe that has loſt its life.

It is wonderfully aſtoniſhing, that you men of learning ſeldom come thus far, as to ſee and feel this glaring truth, that goodneſs muſt be a *living* thing; but, blinded with the empty ſounds of words in variety of languages, are as content and happy *with a religion of nature delineated*, or a book of *axioms*, *maxims*, and *deductions*, mathematically placed one after another, as if you had really found the tree of life. Whereas, in truth, all this is no better than

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the reading a lecture upon the uſe of the heart, liver, and lungs, to a dead carcaſe: for the Life of Goodneſs can no more be raiſed, or brought into the ſoul, by this art of reaſoning, than life can be brought into the carcaſe, by a diſcourſe upon the heart, liver, and lungs, made over it.

O! ACADEMICUS, forget your ſcholarſhip, give up your art and criticiſm, be a plain man, and then the firſt rudiments of ſenſe may teach you, that there, and there only, can goodneſs be, where it comes forth as a *birth of life*, and is the free natural work and fruit of *that* which lives within us. For till goodneſs thus comes from a *life* within us, we have in truth none at all. For reaſon, with all its doctrine, diſcipline, and rules, can only help us to be ſo good, ſo changed, and amended, as a wild beaſt may be, that by reſtraints and methods is taught to put on a ſort of tameneſs, though its wild nature is all the time only reſtrained, and in a readineſs to break forth again as occaſion ſhall offer.

Thus far the maſters of morality and human diſcipline may go: they may tame and reform the outward man, clothe him with the appearance of many images of virtue, which will, ſome or all of them, be put off, juſt as time, occaſion, and fleſh and blood, require

require it. For the goodneſs of a living creature muſt be its own life; it muſt ariſe up in it as its own love, or any paſſion doth; juſt as the fierceneſs of the tyger, and the meekneſs of the lamb, are the birth of their own life: and if goodneſs is not our *natural* birth from our natural parents, we muſt of all neceſſity be born again from a principle above nature, or no goodneſs can be living in us. Now, ſince goodneſs is a life, we have a twofold proof, that no goodneſs can be living in us, till we are born again of the Word and Spirit of God: for nature as well as Scripture aſſures us, that God is originally the *One Good*, and the *One Life*; and therefore no good life can poſſibly be in us, but by the Word, Life, and Spirit of God, having a birth in us. And from this birth alone it is, that the free genuine works of goodneſs flow forth with the freedom of the Divine Life, wherewith the Spirit of God has made us free; loving and doing all manner of good, merely for the ſake of goodneſs; virtuous in all kind of virtue, purely for virtue's-ſake: then we are the natural true children of our heavenly Father, and do the works of heaven with a chearful and willing mind: then it is, that we are good in the manner as God is good, becauſe it is his goodneſs that is born in us; we are perfect as he is perfect,

we

we love as he loves, are patient as he is patient, we give as he gives, we forgive as he forgives, and reſiſt evil only with good as he does.

This, ACADEMICUS, is angelic goodneſs; and is the goodneſs of thoſe who are born again of the Word, and become new creatures in the Spirit of Chriſt. This goodneſs our firſt father loſt, when he choſe to have the eyes of fleſh and blood, and the ſpirit of this world opened in him; and therefore our Redeemer, who well knew what we had loſt and muſt have again, has taught us, in our daily prayer, to aſk for angelic goodneſs in theſe words; *viz. Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.* But I have done; and I think you muſt have done, with your learned ſcruple about the word *angelic.* And now, THEOPHILUS, if you pleaſe, return to your ſubject with HUMANUS.

THEOPHILUS. Let me then tell you, HUMANUS, that I much approve of the way that you intend to proceed in. You are come directly to the truth and heart of the matter, and have hit upon the one only method of putting *Deiſm* to a full ſtand, by reducing Chriſtianity to this one ſingle great point, which ſo evidently contains the whole ground and nature of it.

Now

Now this one great point conſiſts of two eſſential parts: 1ſt, the fall of man from a divine angelic life, into an earthly, beſtial, corruptible, miſerable life of this world. 2dly, The redemption of man, or his regaining his firſt angelic perfection, by a new birth of the Divine Nature, by the *Word* and Spirit of God. Stand ſteadily upon this true Chriſtian ground; and then you will not only ſtand ſafely yourſelf, but you will have left the Deiſt no ground to ſtand upon. For here all the laboured volumes of infidelity, with which theſe laſt ages have ſwarmed, are at once rendered uſeleſs, and cannot put ſo much as a little finger into this debate. Conſult all, from Hobbes to the * Moral Philoſopher, and you conſult in vain; their works are as dead as themſelves, and unable to give forth one word againſt this Chriſtianity. They had a much eaſier taſk upon their hands; for nothing can be eaſier than for reaſon to object, and continue objecting, to the extraordinary matters of the Old and New Teſtament. I do not mention this as an accuſation of the Deiſts, or to charge them with the crafty contrivance of placing the merits of the cauſe where it is not. No, the learning of the Chriſtian world muſt

* A book, intitled, "The Moral Philoſopher," written by Mr. Morgan.

bear

bear the blame of theſe fruitleſs diſputes: the demonſtrators of the truth and reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity have betrayed their own cauſe, and left true Chriſtianity unmentioned in their defences of it. What a reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity have ſome great names helped us to? Juſt as uſeful and good to our fallen ſouls, as the reaſonableneſs of conſenting to the death of Pharaoh and his hoſt in the Red Sea. But you, my friend, being rightly converted to a Chriſtianity that began before the Scriptures were written, and is as old as the creation and fall of man, keep cloſe to its true and real ground; and, inſtead of ſhewing the reaſonableneſs of believing a long hiſtory of things, ſhow the abſolute neceſſity of man's dying to his preſent life, in order to have a better life from God. This is the Chriſtianity that began with the fall, and has been preached ever ſince to every ſon of fallen man, in every corner of the world; and by the ſame preacher that tells every man, that he ought to be better than he is. For was not man fallen from a better ſtate than that he is now in, he could no more be aſhamed or offended at any thing that his nature prompts him to do, than the ox is aſhamed at breaking into a good paſture. Every man therefore, from the beginning of the world, has had

Chriſtianity

Chriſtianity and the Goſpel written and preached within him; as it contains the fall of man, and his want of being raiſed to a better ſtate. But as we ſee, that the truth and reality of his fall, and the truth and reality of his redemption by a real birth from above, can be loſt, nay diſowned, amongſt thoſe that are daily reading and expounding the Scriptures; ſo it is no wonder, that the ſame ſhould have happened to thoſe, who had no Scriptures to read. Juſtly therefore, HUMANUS, are churches and creeds, doctrines above and contrary to reaſon, miracles of the Old and New Teſtament, and all hiſtorical facts and matters, which are ſo great an harveſt to the Deiſts, juſtly, I ſay, are they removed by you out of the debate; and the one great point abovementioned only inſiſted upon as the whole of the matter. For this one point gained, all is gained; and, till this point is cleared up, all the reſt is but a debate about nothing.

For if man is fallen from a Divine Life, no one need to be told, that he can only be redeemed or ſaved from his fall by having the ſame Divine Life born in him again, or a ſecond time. Nothing therefore touches the truth of the debate betwixt the Chriſtian and the Infidel, but that which proves with

with certainty, that man has, or has not loſt a Divine Life.

If he is thus fallen, has died this death to a Divine Life, then the nature and neceſſity of the Chriſtian new-birth ſufficiently proves itſelf. But if it can be proved, that he is not thus fallen, but ſtands in that ſtate and degree of life in which God created him; the Deiſts have reaſon enough to reject the Chriſtian ſcheme of redemption.

Strange it is therefore beyond expreſſion, that every man, whether Chriſtian or Infidel, ſhould not ſee, that here lies the whole of the matter; or that any learned defender of Chriſtianity ſhould think of beginning any where, or in any thing, but where the redemption itſelf begins; or imagine there can be the leaſt ground to propoſe a redemption to man, till he ſhews *why*, and from *what*, he is to be redeemed. Stranger is it ſtill, if you conſider, that Chriſtians have nothing to excuſe their wandering from this one great point, ſince both the Teſtaments bear ſo open a witneſs to it: *in the day that thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die*; ſays the Old Teſtament: *except a man be born again from above, of the Word and Spirit of God, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven*; ſays the New Teſtament.

Thus,

Thus do theſe Two Teſtaments begin with the moſt open declarations of theſe two things: *viz.* The Death of Man to his Firſt created life; and his Redemption only and ſolely by a real Birth of the Divine Life, received again from above. What excuſe therefore can be made for thoſe, who read the Scriptures, and yet overlook that very one point; not only ſo plainly declared, but which, in itſelf, is the one only ground and foundation upon which all the Scriptures ſtand? For had not man died, neither *Moſes*, nor the *Prophets*, had ever been in being. For man not fallen, but abiding in his firſt created perfection of life, had been as free from any outward law, as the light is from darkneſs. The keeping his own nature, had been the keeping, and doing, and ſeeing, and knowing all that God required of him. So that neither law, nor prophecy, has any ground or reaſon, but becauſe man is dead to his firſt life.

But ſeeing man is dead to his firſt life, and living only in an earthly beſtial world, under the power and ſlavery of the evil motions and tempers of groſs fleſh and blood; therefore *Moſes* muſt come with his law, to ſet ſin before him, and give him precepts of reſiſting and dying to all the luſts of this new earthly life, which he is

fallen into: and, therefore, to ſeek for any other learning in or from Moſes, than that of learning to reſiſt and die to the tempers and paſſions of this earthly life, is knowing nothing right of Moſes, nor of ourſelves.

Next after Moſes came the Prophets, or the ſpirit of prophecy, with its *far-ſeeing ſight*, and declaration of glories to come. Now the ground of prophecy is this, it is becauſe man is to be *reſtored* to his firſt glorious ſtate; and therefore the ſpirit of prophecy comes forth from God to awaken *hope* and *faith*, expectation and deſire, in man; becauſe theſe are the only powers that can draw him out of the mire of the earthly life in which he ſticks, and carry him up to his firſt heavenly ſtate again. Nothing, therefore, is to be ſought for in or from the Prophets, but the increaſe of our hope, faith, and deſire of the *New Birth* of that glorious life which we have loſt, and they foretold was to be had again.

Thus, my friend, you ſee the importance of this one point: Moſes and the Prophets have no ground of reaſon but this, that man has loſt his Divine Life; and that this ſame Divine Life is to be born again in him. Now ſeeing this is the ground and reaſon of the Scriptures, therefore is it the one unerring key to the right uſe of them. They have

have only this one intent, to make man know, reſiſt, and abhor the working of his fallen earthly nature; and to turn the faith, hope, and longing deſire of his heart to God: and therefore we are only to read them with this view, and to learn this one leſſon from them. Whatever therefore occurs in the Scriptures, that cannot be turned to this general end, but relates only to ſome temporal, occaſional, or private matter; is of no more importance to us, than the cloak and parchment which St. Paul ſpeaks of.

How many hundred barns muſt there be, to hold all the learned volumes, that had never been written, had man looked upon the Scriptures as having no other view or end, but to teach him to renounce the tempers of his fallen earthly nature, and live unto God in faith and prayer to be born again of the Divine Nature! But this one end being overlooked by learned reaſon, *Hebrew* and *Syriac*, *Arabic*, *Greek*, and *Latin*, have been called in, to torture the Scriptures into a chaos of confuſed opinions, that has covered the Chriſtian world with darkneſs, and loſt the only good that was to be had from the written word of God. Whereas, ſtanding upon the ground on which you ſtand, with only this one great

point at heart, the Scriptures are a plain, eaſy, and certain inſtruction; and no honeſt unlearned heart ſtands in need of any commentator, to help him to all the benefit that can be had from the Scriptures, or ſecure him from any hurtful error.

HUMANUS. Indeed, THEOPHILUS, my own experience can bear a full teſtimony to the truth of all that you have ſaid. For upon my reading now the New Teſtament, with this key in my hand, *viz.* of man thus fallen, and thus called to a new Birth from heaven; every thing I read in it has Spirit and Life, and overflows my ſoul with ſuch an unction, and ſenſibility of ſweet doctrine, as I am not able to expreſs. For whilſt I conſider it only as written to drive all earthly tempers and paſſions out of the ſoul, and inflame the heart with love and deſire of the *Grace*, the *Spirit*, the *Light* and *Life* of the heavenly nature, I can ſay, as the Jewiſh officers did, Never man ſpoke like Chriſt and his Apoſtles.

Why was the Son of God made man? It was becauſe man was to be made again a divine creature. Why did man want ſuch a Saviour? It was becauſe he was become earthly, mortal, groſs fleſh and blood. Now take Chriſt in this light, and conſider man in

in this ſtate, and then all that is ſaid in the Goſpel ſtands in the fulleſt light.

Thus, *Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will refreſh you.* How poor, how mean, and uncertain a ſenſe is there in this, till you know, that man has loſt his Divine Nature, and is fallen into a world that is all *labour, burden,* and *miſery!* But as ſoon as this is known, then how eaſy, how plain, is the full and higheſt ſenſe of theſe words, *Come unto me, all that labour, are weary and heavy laden, and I will refreſh you!*—I will bring to life that firſt happy ſtate, which you have loſt. This is the *note,* the *paraphraſe,* the *expoſitor,* the *key* to the true ſenſe of every doctrine of Chriſt; which, though variouſly expreſſed to awaken the heart, is only one and the ſame thing. Thus, *Bleſſed are they that mourn, for they ſhall be comforted.* But why ſo? Becauſe he that is troubled at the corruption, vanity, and impurity of his fallen earthly ſtate, has the comfort of the heavenly life ready for him. Again, *Bleſſed are they that hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs, for they ſhall be filled.* How plain and great is the ſenſe here, as ſoon as we know, that Chriſt is our righteouſneſs; and that the righteous life of Chriſt in the ſoul, is that life which our firſt Father loſt!

Therefore, to hunger and thirſt after this righteouſneſs, is the one way to be filled with that Divine Life, which we had loſt. Again, *If any man thirſt, let him come unto me and drink: and out of his belly ſhall flow rivers of living water.* What can the Latin or Greek critic do here? Nothing at all. He will only try to make ſome excuſe for the ſtrangeneſs of the phraſe. But when theſe words are read by one who knows, that he and all mankind have loſt the Divine Nature, he taſtes and feels the glad tidings which they bring; and is in love with theſe ſweet ſounds, which promiſe ſuch an overflowing return of heaven into his ſoul. Again, *I beſeech you*, ſays the Apoſtle, *as ſtrangers and pilgrims, abſtain from fleſhly luſts, which war againſt the ſoul*; &c. The critic looks into his books, to ſee how Latin and Greek authors have uſed the words *Stranger* and *Pilgrim*, and ſo ſome ſenſe or other is given to the Apoſtle; but the Chriſtian, who knows that man, wandering out of Paradiſe, a colony of heaven, was taken captive by the *ſtars* and *elements*, to live in labour and toil, in ſickneſs and pain, in hunger and thirſt, in heat and cold, amongſt the beaſts of the field; where evil ſpirits, like roaring lions, ſeek to devour him; he only knows in what truth

and

and reality man is a poor Stranger and diſtreſſed Pilgrim upon earth. Again, *To the poor*, ſaith Chriſt, *the Goſpel is preached.* The critic only conſiders the ſeveral kinds of worldly poverty. But the Chriſtian, who knows that the real great poverty of man conſiſts in his having loſt the riches and greatneſs of his firſt life, knows, that to this poor man the Goſpel is preached, becauſe he only, who is ſenſible of this poverty, can hear and receive it. For to man, inſenſible of his fallen ſtate, the glad tidings of the Goſpel are but like news from Fairy Land; and the croſs of Chriſt can only be a ſtumbling-block and fooliſhneſs to him, whether he be a Chriſtian, a Jew, or a Greek. Thus does it appear, that all the doctrines and ſayings of Chriſt and his apoſtles, are full of a comfortable, divine, and exalted ſenſe, or are mere empty words, juſt as the fall of man from a Divine Life, is either owned or diſowned. But I have done.

THEOPHILUS. Thus far then, HUMANUS, we are agreed; that the fall of man into the life and ſtate of this world, is the whole ground of his redemption; and that a real birth of Chriſt in the ſoul, is the whole nature of it. Let me now only aſk you,

How you would endeavour to convince a man of his fallen ſtate?

HUMANUS. I would not begin with the account that Moſes gives of it, for ſeveral reaſons, but chiefly for theſe two: Firſt, Becauſe the *fall* is not an *hiſtorical* matter; nor would a mere hiſtorical knowledge of it be of any uſe, or do him any real good. Secondly, Becauſe Moſes's account is not the proof of the fall, and therefore not to be appealed to as ſuch.

Moſes is the firſt hiſtorian of *natural death*, and has recorded the death of the firſt man, and of many others who were born of him: but the *proof* that man is *mortal*, lies not in Moſes's hiſtory of the death of the firſt man, but in the known nature of man, and the world from which he has his life. Again, we do not want Moſes to aſſure us, that there was a firſt man; that he had ſomething from *heaven*, and ſomething from the *earth* in him; and muſt have come into the world in another manner, than all thoſe who have deſcended from him; for every man is himſelf the infallible proof of this: *Moſes* is only the hiſtorian that has recorded the *when*, and *where*, and *how*, this firſt man came into the world, and what was his name. But the *proof* and *certainty* of the fact, that ſuch a firſt

a firſt man there muſt have been, lies not in Moſes's account, but ſtands proved to every man from his own nature and ſtate in this world.

Thus it is with the *fall:* we have no more occaſion to go to Moſes, to prove that man and the world are in a fallen ſtate, than to prove that man is a poor, miſerable, weak, vain, diſtreſſed, corrupt, depraved, ſelfiſh, ſelf-tormenting, periſhing creature; and that the world is a ſad mixture of falſe good, and real evil, a mere ſcene of all ſorts of trials, vexations, and miſeries, all ariſing from the frame, and nature, and condition both of man and the world. This is the full infallible proof of the fall of man; which is not a thing learnt from any hiſtory, but ſhews itſelf every where, and every day, with ſuch clearneſs as we ſee the ſun. Moſes is not the prover of the fact, that man is fallen; but the recorder of the *when* and *how*, and the *manner* in which the fall hath happened.

My firſt attempt, therefore, upon any man, to convince him of the fall, as the ground of the redemption, ſhould be an attempt to do that for him, which affliction, diſappointments, ſickneſs, pain, and the approach of death, have a natural tendency to do; *viz.* to convince him of the vanity, poverty,

poverty, and misery of his life and condition in this world. For as this is the true proof of the fallen state of man, so man can only be convinced of it, by having this proof truly set before him. I would, therefore, appeal at first to nothing but his own nature and condition in the world; and shew him how unreasonable, nay, impossible it is, that a God, who has nothing in himself but infinite goodness and infinite happiness, should bring forth a race of intelligent creatures, that have neither natural goodness, nor natural happiness. The inspired saints of God say thus: *Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery:* and again, *Man walketh in a vain shadow, and disquieteth himself in vain.* Now if what is here truly said of mankind, could be truly said of any order of the beasts and animals of the field, who could defend the goodness of God in bringing such creatures into such a state of life? Now though the Deist rejects the Scriptures, considered as a volume of divine revelation, yet every thing that he outwardly sees, and inwardly feels, demonstrates this *capital truth* of Scripture, that man is in this poor and miserable state of life. And, therefore, every thing that we know of God, and every thing that we know of man, is a daily

daily irreſiſtible proof, that man is in a fallen ſtate. Look at the human infant juſt come out of the womb, you can hardly bear the ſight; it is a picture of ſuch deformity, nakedneſs, weakneſs, and helpleſs diſtreſs, as is not to be ſeen amongſt the home-born animals of this world: the chicken has its birth from no ſin, and therefore it comes forth in beauty; it runs and pecks as ſoon as its ſhell is broken: the pig and the calf go both to play, as ſoon as the dam is delivered of them; they are pleaſed with themſelves, and pleaſe the eye that beholds their frolic ſtate and beauteous cloathing; whilſt the new-born babe of a woman, that is to have an upright form, that is to view the heavens, and worſhip the God that made him, lies for months in groſs ignorance, weakneſs, and impurity; as ſad a ſpectacle when he firſt begins to breathe the life of this world, as when in the agonies of death he breathes his laſt!

What is all this, but the ſtrongeſt proof, that man is the only creature that belongs not to this world, but is fallen into it through ſin? and therefore his birth, in ſuch diſtreſs, bears all theſe marks of ſhame and weakneſs. Had he been originally of this world, it is neceſſary to ſuppoſe, that this world had done the higheſt honour to its higheſt

higheſt creature; and that he had begun his life in greater perfection than any other animal, and brought with him a more beautiful cloathing than the fineſt lilies of the field. But, when the human infant is ſet upon his legs, and begins to act for himſelf, he ſoon becomes a more pitiable object than when crying in the cradle. The ſtrength of his life is a mere ſtrength of wild paſſions; his reaſon is craft, and ſelfiſh ſubtlety; he loves and hates only as fleſh and blood prompt him; and jails and gibbets cannot keep him from theft and murder. If he is rich, he is tormented with pride and ambition; if poor, with murmuring and diſcontent: be he which he will, ſooner or later, diſordered paſſions, diſappointed luſts, fruitleſs labour, pain and ſickneſs, will tear him from this world in ſuch *travail* as his mother felt, when ſhe brought forth the ſinful animal.

Now all this evil and miſery, is purely the natural and neceſſary effect of his birth in the beſtial fleſh and blood of this world; and there is nothing in his *natural* ſtate, that can put a ſtop to it; he muſt be evil and miſerable, *ſo long* as he has *only* the life of this world in him. Therefore the abſolute certainty of the fall, and the abſolute neceſſity of a new birth, are truths, independently

pendently of Scripture, plain to a demonſtration. Thus, God is in himſelf infinite goodneſs, and infinite happineſs; but man, in his preſent earthly birth and life, can neither have goodneſs nor happineſs; therefore his preſent ſtate of life could not be brought forth by a God who is all goodneſs and happineſs. Thus every man, that believes in a Creator infinitely perfect, is under a neceſſity of believing the whole ground of Chriſtian redemption; namely, that man hath ſome way or other loſt that perfection of life, which he had at firſt from his Creator.

But the Chriſtian has yet an additional proof of this matter, becauſe the Scriptures, which with him are infallible, ſo frequently and openly bear witneſs to it. Thus, *Let us make man in our image, according to our likeneſs.* How great, how divine, is this beginning of man? How can there be any evil or miſery, any vanity or weakneſs, in a creature ſo brought forth? But now what is become of this man? for if you look at man juſt coming out of the womb, the pitiable object above deſcribed, what can be ſo abſurd, as to call this birth, his creation in the likeneſs and after the image of God? Now what is ſaid of the firſt man, is not ſpoken of one perſon, but of the human nature;

nature; for, the firſt man was only the firſt inſtance of that which mankind were to be. He had no perfection peculiar to himſelf, but that of being the firſt man; and had he ſtood, all that came from him, had come to life as he did, in the ſame ſtrength and glory of perfection, and not been born of a beſtial womb, like the wild aſs's colt.

Again, ſet the following text againſt Moſes's perfection of the firſt image of God: *Man that is born of a woman, hath but a ſhort time to live, and is full of miſery.* Is not this a full proof, that the firſt created life of man is quite dead, and that an earthly life of miſery is riſen up inſtead of it? Again, the apoſtle ſaith, *The natural man knoweth not the things of God; they are fooliſhneſs unto him.* Can this natural man, the man of earthly fleſh and blood, that can have no acquaintance with, or knowledge of God, to whom the *things of God are fooliſhneſs*; can this be the man firſt created in the image and likeneſs of God? What can be more abſurd than ſuch a thought? Or what excuſe can be made for that learning, which cannot ſee, from ſo plain a Scripture, that human nature, *now*, is not that human nature, which it was at firſt created; but is dead to that firſt life, which it had in the image and likeneſs of God, or the things of God

God could not poſſibly be *foolishneſs* to it? But I will end this matter with theſe borrowed words: " We were no more created " to be in the ſorrows, burdens, and anguiſh of an *earthly life*, than the angels " were created to be in the wrath and darkneſs of hell. It is as contrary to the will " and goodneſs of God towards us, that " we are out of Paradiſe; as it is contrary " to the deſigns and goodneſs of God towards " the angels, that ſome of them are out of " heaven, priſoners of darkneſs.

" The groſſneſs, impurity, ſickneſs, pain, " and corruption, of our bodies, is brought " upon us by ourſelves, in the ſame manner, " as the hideous ſerpentine forms of the " devils are brought upon them. How abſurd, and even blaſphemous would it be, " to ſay, with the Scriptures and the church, " *That we are the children of wrath, and born* " *in Sin*, if we had that nature, which God " at firſt gave us? What a reproach upon " God, to ſay, that this world is a valley " of miſery, a ſhadow of death, full of diſorders, ſnares, evils, and temptations, if " this was an original creation, or that ſtate " of things for which God created us? Is " it not as conſiſtent with the goodneſs and " perfection of God, to ſpeak of the miſery and diſorder that unfallen holy angels

" find

" find above, and of the vanity, emptineſs,
" and ſorrow of their heavenly ſtate; as to
" ſpeak of the miſery of men, and the ſor-
" rows of this world, if men and the world
" were in that order, in which God at firſt
" had placed them? If God could make any
" place poor and vain, and create any Beings
" into a ſtate of vanity and vexation of
" ſpirit, he might do ſo in all places, and
" to all Beings‡."

THEOPHILUS. You have put the fall, HUMANUS, upon its right proof, and ſhown great judgment in your intended method of converting any one to the belief of it. You have ſet the whole matter in ſo juſt a light, that I have nothing that I would add to it.

HUMANUS. Give me leave, Gentlemen, juſt to add a word or two concerning another plain indication, that man has loſt that life and nature in which he was firſt created. *Reaſon* has been my God, and is the vain idol of modern Deiſm, and modern Chriſtianity; and yet human *reaſon* has no higher a birth, than human *ignorance*, *infirmity*, and *mortality:* they all began together; they are inſeparable; they generate and are generated from one another; they are the life of each other; and they muſt live and die together,

‡ Serious Anſwer to Dr. *Trapp*, on the Sin, Folly, and Danger, of being Righteous over-much, p. 35.

and

and all bear the ſame witneſs to the fallen ſtate of man. For no creature can come immediately from God, into a ſtate of any ignorance of any thing, that is fit and proper to be known by it. This is as impoſſible, as for God to have an envious and evil will. Now all right and natural knowledge, in whatever creature it is, is *ſenſible*, *intuitive*, and *its own evidence*. But *opinion*, *reaſoning*, or *doubting*, (for they are all but one thing) can only *then* begin, when the creature has *loſt* its firſt right and natural ſtate, and is got *ſomewhere*, and become *ſomewhat*, that it cannot tell what to make of. Then begins *doubting*, from thence *reaſoning*, from thence *debating:* and this is the high birth of our magnified reaſon, as nobly born as *groping* is, which has its beginning in and from darkneſs, or the loſs of light. Hence we have a full proof, that man has loſt his firſt natural ſtate in which God created him. For reaſoning, doubt, and perplexity, in any creature, is the effect of ſome fall or departure from its firſt ſtate of nature; and ſhows, that it wants, and is ſeeking, ſomething, that its nature would have, but knows not how to come at it. The beaſts ſeek not after truth; a plain proof, that it has no relation to them, has no ſuitableneſs to their nature, nor ever

belonged to them. Man is in queſt of it, in perplexity about it, and cannot come at it; takes lies to be truth, and truth to be lies; a plain proof, both that he has it not, and yet has had it, was created in it, and for it; for man can ſeek for nothing, but that which he has loſt, and wants; nor could he form the leaſt idea of truth, but becauſe it has belonged to him, and ought to be his.

The beaſts have no ignorance of any thing, that concerns them; but have all the ſenſible intuitive knowledge of every thing that is the good of their nature. But man, left to his reaſon, is all over ignorance, doubt, conjecture, and perplexity, in matters of the higheſt moment; about what he himſelf is, what is his chief good, where he is to ſeek it, and how to obtain it. For to aſk your reaſon, how God is your God, how you are in him and from him, what he is in himſelf, and what he is in you; is but like aſking your hands, to feel out the *thickneſs*, or the *thinneſs*, of the light. To aſk your reaſon, whether the ſoul of man is immortal in its nature, is to as good purpoſe, is going no further out of the way, than if you was to aſk your *eyes* to ſhew you, where *extenſion* begins, and where it ends. To aſk your reaſon, whether man has any thing

of

of God, or the Divine Nature, in him; is juſt as ſuitable to the nature and power of your reaſon, as if you was to aſk your *noſe*, whether this or that ſweet aromatic ſmell in the garden, has any *heavenly power* mixed with and opening itſelf in it.

Reaſon, therefore, is ſo far from being able to help man to that knowledge, which his nature and condition want, that it can only help his ignorance to increaſe and fructify in doubts, fictions, and abſurd debates. And the thing cannot be otherwiſe; *man* muſt *walk in a vain ſhadow*, ſo long as reaſon is his oracle. For nothing can act ſuitably to nature, find its true ſtate in nature, or anſwer the end of its creation, by the *power* of reaſon; becauſe reaſon is not the *life*, the *power*, or *former* of nature; and therefore has no more power over nature, than over the powers and principles of vegetation, either in the body of man, or any other creature. He, therefore, who turns to his reaſon, as the true power and light of his nature, betrays the ſame ignorance of the whole nature, power, and office of reaſon, as if he was to try to ſmell with his eyes, or ſee with his noſe. For as each of theſe ſenſes has only its *one work* or power, which it cannot alter, or exceed; ſo reaſon has only its *one work* or power, which it cannot

alter, or exceed; and that one work is, to be a bare obſerver and comparer of things that manifeſt themſelves to it by the ſenſes: this is as much its one only power, as ſeeing is the only power of the eyes. When, therefore, reaſon takes upon it to determine on things not manifeſted to it by the ſenſes, as to judge about a Divine New Birth, a Divine Faith, or how the ſoul wants, or does not want God; it is then as much out of its place and office, as the eye that takes upon it to ſmell; and its true name and nature is, *whim*, *humour*, *caprice*, *conjecture*, *opinion*, *fancy*, and every other ſpecies of blindneſs and paſſion.

Now ſuppoſe a man to come thus into the world, with this chief difference from other creatures; that he is at a loſs to find out what he is, how he is to live, and what he is to ſeek, as his chief happineſs; what he is to own of a God, of providence, religion, *&c.* ſuppoſe him to have faculties that put him upon this ſearch, and no faculties that can ſatisfy his inquiry; and what can you ſuppoſe more miſerable in himſelf, or more unworthy of a good Creator? therefore, if you will not ſuppoſe a God, that has been good to all creatures, and given every animal its proper light of nature, except man; you muſt be forced to own, that man has certainly

tainly loſt the true light and perfection of his nature, which God at firſt gave him.

But I believe ACADEMICUS wants to ſay ſomething, and therefore I have done.

ACADEMICUS. I was only going to ſay, that every attribute of God, every thing that ſenſe and reaſon force us to ſee, and know, and feel, both of ourſelves, and the world, join with the letter and ſpirit of all Scripture in atteſting, that man has certainly had a Divine Life, to which he has certainly died. But yet I muſt own it is very difficult to conceive, how a creature brought forth in ſo high perfection, in ſuch enjoyment of the Life, Light, and Spirit of God, could either deceive himſelf, or be deceived by another.

THEOPHILUS. All that we want to know, my friend, is the certainty of the fact, and this is of the greateſt moment to us: for this is it, that takes us from the herd of earthly animals, and lays the foundation of religion, and Divine Virtue. For had not a Divine Life at *firſt* been in us, we ſhould be *now* at the ſame diſtance from all true virtue and goodneſs, and as incapable of forming the leaſt thought or deſire of it, as other animals; and ſhould have nothing to do, but to look to ourſelves, live to our earthly nature, and make the moſt of this

world: for this is the only wiſdom and goodneſs, that an earthly nature is capable of, whether it be a man, or a fox. The certainty therefore of the fact, of our firſt Divine Birth, is all; nothing more need be inquired after. For on this ground ſtands all our comfort; hence it is, that, in faith and hope, we can look up to God as our Father, to heaven as our native country, and have the honour to be accounted only as ſtrangers and pilgrims upon earth.

But however, to remove your difficulty, I ſhall give you a little ſketch of the poſſibility of man's falling, although created in the perfection above-mentioned.

Now ſuppoſing God to have brought a new intelligent creature into a new world, all the attributes of God oblige us to ſuppoſe this creature to be created in a perfect ſtate both inwardly and outwardly. As intelligent, it muſt partake of the Divine Underſtanding; as living, it muſt have a degree of the Divine Life in it; as good, it muſt have a birth of the Divine Goodneſs in it; as an offspring of Divine Love, it muſt have a Divine Happineſs, for the enjoyment of which the Love of God created it. Now there is but *one poſſible* way for this intelligent creature, thus endowed, to fall from, or loſe the happineſs of its firſt created ſtate.

It

It cannot knowingly chuſe miſery, or the loſs of its happineſs: therefore it can only fall by *ſuch* an ignorance, or *power* of falling, as is conſiſtent with its perfect ſtate. Now this power lay wholly in the *newneſs* of its life: it only began to find itſelf an intelligent Being; and yet had a power of looking with the eyes of its underſtanding either inwards, or outwards, upwards, or downwards. It had a power of acquieſcing and rejoicing in *that*, which it found itſelf to be, and adoring that power and goodneſs which had brought it into the poſſeſſion of ſuch a nature: and it had a power of *wandering* into conjectures, and reaſons about *that* which it *was not*. Now as a free, intelligent creature, it could not be without this power of thus turning its intelligent eye; and yet as a beginning creature that had no *experience*, this power could not be free from a *poſſibility* of wandering; and therefore its power of wandering was not a defect, but a neceſſary part of its firſt perfect ſtate. Now in this *poſſibility* of wandering with its intelligent eye, looking where it ought not, and entering into conjectures about *that* which *it was not*, may be clearly ſeen the poſſibility of its falling from a ſtate of high perfection.

This is the one only poſſible way for a good, intelligent, *new* creature, to loſe its happineſs. And I think it may juſtly be affirmed, that the *Moſaic* account of the fall of man is exactly this very caſe; namely, that the eye of his *new experienced* underſtanding, beginning to caſt a wandering look into *that* which he *was not*, was by an unſuſpected *ſubtlety*, or ſerpent, drawn into a *reaſoning* and conjecturing about a certain *good* and *evil*, which were no part of his own created ſtate.

Which inquiry, being given into, ended in the real knowledge of this *good* and *evil*, the ſenſibility of which became an immediate death to his firſt Divine Life, deſtroyed the angelic image in the Likeneſs of God, and ſet a groſs, earthly, naked, aſhamed, frighted, wretched animal of beſtial fleſh and blood, in its place, the only animal to which this new knowledge of good and evil could belong.

Suppoſing therefore the fall of man, which is a fact atteſted, and proved by every thing we know of God, ourſelves, and the world; the *Moſaic* account of it has every mark of truth, ſobriety, and juſtneſs, as being a plain and eaſy deſcription of the one only way, by which a creature ſo endowed could change or loſe its firſt happy ſtate.

ACADEMICUS.

ACADEMICUS. Truly, THEOPHILUS, you have given a moſt natural and full ſolution of my difficulty, by which, I ſuppoſe, you mean as well to explain the fall of angels, as of men. But, Sir, if that pride, to which their fall is charged, muſt have ſtolen upon them, in that ſame *unſuſpected way*, in which the longing after the tree of good and evil inſinuated itſelf into man; *viz.* from a wandering look into *that* which they were not, occaſioned by the *newneſs* of their untried life, in which they had but juſt began to be; ſuffer me then, to aſk, Why the fallen angels were not, at firſt, the immediate objects of divine mercy and goodneſs? why they are to be for ever priſoners of a never-ending hell? or, are you of opinion, that angels, as well as men, will be at laſt brought back to their firſt ſtate?

THEOPHILUS. Your queſtions, ACADEMICUS, ſeem to have too much curioſity in them: but, as I hope you will not give way to this temper, ſo I will, for once, comply with your demands.

The *fall* of angels muſt be ſuppoſed to have been as ſoon after their creation, as that of Adam. Had they ſtood any time in their new-created ſtate, they had been in one and the ſame impoſſibility of falling, as the angels that

that are now in heaven. For no pure, intelligent, good, and holy created Being, can poſſibly loſe this divine ſtate of perfection, but through the firſt uſe of its untried ſtate and powers. The manner of *Adam*'s falling into the life of this world, plainly ſhews the manner how the angels fell into hell, namely, at firſt only by looking and conjecturing with their intelligent eye into *that* which they were not, which was not opened in them, but was hid in God. This looking went on till it became a luſt and ſtrong longing after that *ſomewhat*; juſt as it had done in *Adam*, who ſo gazed upon the earthly good and evil, till it opened itſelf in him. *Adam* looked only at that which was *creaturely*, and in a *life below* him; and therefore only that *lower*, *creaturely*, *beſtial* life, was brought forth in him. But the angel turning his wandering look into that *height* and depth which was *not creaturely*, but hid in God; namely, into the *might* and *ſtrength* of eternity, that he might know *how* the creaturely life was *kindled* by it; and thinking himſelf by his exalted nature, to be as near to this *great power*, and as capable of *entering* into it, as *Adam* thought himſelf near to and capable of knowing the good and evil of the earthly life; and as *Adam* thought to be like God in this new knowledge,

ledge, so the angel imagined to be like God, could he enter into *this knowledge*, how the *might* of God kindled the creaturely life, for then he himself should have the power of creating or kindling the creaturely life: and as *Adam*'s imagination brought forth a lust and longing, which could not be stopped, till the earthly knowledge, and earthly life, had opened itself in him; so the angel's imagination begot such a *lust* and *longing* to know the *ground* and *original* of life, as would not be stopt till the *ground* and *original* of life, namely, that *depth of darkness and fire*, in and from which every creaturely life must begin, was totally opened in him, and he as much swallowed up by hell, as *Adam* was by the earthly life. Thus you may see, how the same aspiring imagination (but with regard to different matters) rising in the same manner, and from the same cause in both these creatures, and working itself up into a *lust* and *longing*, brought the one from heaven into hell, and the other from paradise into a bestial world.

Now as the lust of *Adam*, when it had obtained its desire, opened all the properties and tempers of the bestial life in him; so the lust of the angel, when it got what it wanted, *viz.* the *ground* and original of the creaturely life, which is *darkness* and *fire*; immediately

immediately opened all the dreadful properties of darkneſs and fire in him, which at once ſwallowed up or extinguiſhed the angelic nature. Hence wrath, hatred, pride, envy, malice, and every enmity to light and love, are the *one only* life of the fallen angel; and he can will and act nothing elſe, but as theſe properties of darkneſs and fire drive him.

To aſk, therefore, Why the fallen angels continue in their ſtate, is to aſk, why *darkneſs* is not made to be *light?* For the *root* and *ground* of nature is *unchangeable*; it keeps its *own nature*, or it could not be the *ground*; it muſt ſtand always in its *own place*, and be only the ground and root; it cannot riſe higher than the root, no more than the root of the tree can be its branches and fruit. The angels, therefore, being fallen into the ground and root of nature, have only the working life of the ground and root of nature in them; and therefore ſeem to be as unchangeable, and incapable of having any other, as the root itſelf is.

To aſk, therefore, why the fallen angels were not helped by the mercy and goodneſs of God, as fallen man was; is like aſking, why the refreſhing dew of heaven does not do that to *flint*, which it does to the vegetable plant? for as the nature of the flint is too

too hard, and too much compacted, to receive any alteration from the ſweet ſoftneſs of refreſhing water; ſo the fallen angel, like the flint, being ſhut up in the wrathful working of its own hard darkneſs and fire, the goodneſs of God can have no entrance into it.

For what are we to underſtand by the *mercy* and *goodneſs* of God? his mercy is his patience; and his goodneſs, is his *light*, and *word*, and *Holy Spirit*. Now every creature has the benefit of divine patience; but no creature can have his *goodneſs*, but that which is capable of receiving his *light* and *holy ſpirit*.

And his Light, and Holy Spirit, cannot enter into a creature, as an external, additional thing, that may be given to it, whether it will or not, but muſt be brought forth as a birth in it. For the Light, and Spirit of God, can be no-where, but as a *birth*, whether it be in God, or the creature. And therefore the goodneſs of God can be imparted to no creature, but that which is capable of a *birth* of the Light and Spirit of God; or, in the words of Scripture, unleſs it be *born of the word and ſpirit of God*.

This therefore you may reſt upon, as a certain truth, that the *one only* reaſon, why the fallen angels have as *yet* had nothing of the

the Spirit or Light of God breathed into, or born in them, is, becauſe they are as *yet* utterly incapable of ſuch a birth, or of being helped by the Divine Goodneſs. For as flame cannot communicate itſelf to flint, nor the Spirit of God to a beaſt; becauſe the flint ſtands in the utmoſt contrariety to flame, and the beaſt in a total incapacity of holineſs; ſo the fallen angel is in its working life altogether incapable of receiving the Spirit and Life of God into it. Were it not thus, angels had been helped, as early as man: for the goodneſs, or the Light and Spirit of God loſes no time, but ſtands always in the ſame fullneſs of communication of itſelf to every creature that is capable of receiving it.

And therefore it is, that fallen man was immediately helped, becauſe he fell only into earthly fleſh and blood, in which the *light* of this world is kindled, which light has ſomething of heaven in it, and was kindled by the light of heaven.

And therefore the goodneſs of God, or his light, and holy Spirit, could come to man's aſſiſtance in the *light of his life*, and therein begin a covenant of redemption with him. For in this light of his life, which is a ray of heaven, the *inſpoken word* in paradiſe could enter, and have communion with

with it, and make itſelf to be a beginning of ſalvation to all thoſe, who by faith and hope would lay hold of it, and endeavour after a new birth from it. Thus ſtands the ground and reaſon why men, and not angels, were immediately helped at their fall.

As to your laſt queſtion, whether I believe the final reſtoration of all the fallen angels; I ſhall only ſay, that neither antient nor modern writers, on either ſide of the queſtion, have touched the true merits of the cauſe, or ſpoke to that point, on which the deciſion of the matter wholly reſts.

For it can neither be ſufficiently affirmed, nor ſufficiently denied, by any arguments, drawn either from the divine attributes, or texts of Scripture; for they cannot come up to the point in queſtion. But the true ground and merit of the cauſe lies ſolely in the *poſſibility* of the thing, which no one has attempted to prove, nor perhaps is any one able to do it; namely, to ſhew from a true ground, that the diabolical nature is poſſible to be altered. Darkneſs can by no omnipotence be made to be light; it can only be ſuppreſſed, or overcome by it, or forced to be hid under it, as heaven hides or overcomes

overcomes hell; but ſtill the darkneſs has its firſt nature, never to be changed.

Now if any one can ſhew, that the devils are not *eſſentially* evil, as darkneſs is eſſentially dark, but have only ſuch an *accidental* difference from goodneſs, as *ice* has from water, or a flint from tranſparent glaſs; then their reſtoration is poſſible, and they will infallibly have all their evil removed out of them by the goodneſs of God.

But unleſs it could be ſhown from a true ground in nature, that the fallen angels muſt have ſomething of the heavenly life in them, though ſhut up in a thouſand times harder death, than fire is in the dark flint; no length of time, or any thing elſe, can produce any alteration, or ceſſation of their evil nature.

For time cannot alter the nature or eſſence of things; it only ſuffers that to come to paſs, which is poſſible, and conſiſtent with the nature of things. No length of time can make a *circle* to have, or give forth, the properties of a *right line*.

Now if the fallen angels have nothing heavenly in them, but ſtand in as full a contrariety to all that is heavenly, as the circle does to the properties of the *right line*; then goodneſs is as impoſſible to be ever awakened in them, as in a beaſt. The beaſt muſt always

always be what it was at firſt; and for this reaſon, becauſe nothing but the beſtial nature is in it: if, therefore, the fallen angel is totally helliſh, as the beaſt is beſtial, it muſt always be what it is.

But we have launched far enough in a deep that does not belong to us; and which cannot be ſufficiently affirmed, or denied, but from the known poſſibility, or the known impoſſibility of the thing, which does not yet appear. If it is poſſible, I am heartily glad of it; and am alſo ſure enough, that it will then come to paſs in its own time. For if he could not be thought to be a good man, who did not do all that he could to make ſinners become holy and happy in goodneſs; we may be ſure enough, that the boundleſs Goodneſs of God will ſet no bounds to itſelf, but remove every miſery from every creature that is capable of it. But let me now return to HUMANUS, and aſk him, That ſuppoſing he could not convince a man of the certainty of his fallen ſtate, how he would further proceed with him.

HUMANUS. Truly, THEOPHILUS, I would proceed no further at all; and for this good reaſon, Becauſe I ſhould then have nothing to proceed upon. Did I cer-certainly know of an infallible remedy for

every diſorder of the eyes, only to be had by going to *China* for it, I ſhould not attempt to perſuade a man, who believed his eyes to be ſound and good, to leave all that he had, and go to *China* for this infallible remedy for bad eyes.

Now, to preſs a man to deny himſelf, and leave all that he hath in the enjoyments of fleſh and blood, in order to be reconciled to God, who believes himſelf to be in the *ſame good* ſtate, in which God created him; ſeems to be as wild a project, as to deſire him who is well pleaſed with the goodneſs of his ſight, to go to *China* to be helped to ſee.

And indeed, I very well know, from former experience, that all diſcourſes about the reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity, the doctrine of the croſs, the exceeding love of God in giving ſo great a Saviour, with many more things of the like nature, were mere empty ſounds, heard with the greateſt indifference, and incapable of raiſing the leaſt ſerioufneſs in me, merely becauſe I had not the leaſt notion or ſuſpicion of the truth and greatneſs of my fallen ſtate, and therefore was not the man who had any fitneſs to be affected with theſe matters. And thence it was that *Chriſt* ſaid, *Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will*

will refreſh you; as plain as if he ſaid, No one elſe can come to me, nor any one elſe be refreſhed by me.

Here, therefore, in my humble opinion, ſhould all *begin*, who would propagate Chriſtianity, or make true converts to it; and *here ſtop*, as *Chriſt* did. It is only the weary and heavy laden, that are fitted to be converts, or refreſhed; and therefore we can no way help a man to be a Chriſtian, or fit him to be refreſhed by *Chriſt*, but by bringing him into a full ſenſibility of the evil, and burden, and vanity, of his natural ſtate. And if he cannot be made ſenſible of this, we are to leave him to himſelf in his natural ſtate, till ſome good providence awakens him out of it; and not make propoſals to him of the reaſonableneſs of believing the Holy Trinity, the Incarnation of the Son of God, and the neceſſity of his ſufferings and death: for this method is full as abſurd, as to enter into ſolemn debate with a confeſſed atheiſt, about the reaſonableneſs of worſhipping God in Spirit and Truth; for, as the exiſtence of a God is the only ground of proving that he ought to be worſhipped in Spirit and in Truth, ſo the certainty and belief of our fallen ſtate, is the only ground of ſhewing the reaſonableneſs of the myſteries of redemption. And

he that diſowns the Fall of Man from a Divine Life, has all the ſame reaſons for rejecting the myſteries of our ſalvation, as the atheiſt has to reject the doctrine of a ſpiritual worſhip of God. Therefore, to expoſe the myſteries of our ſalvation, to the wrangle of a debate with an unbeliever of the fall of man, which myſteries have no other ground to ſtand upon; is not only helping him to an eaſy triumph over you, but is the moſt likely method to prevent his ever being a Chriſtian. For ſeeing how eaſily he can ridicule myſteries, which, to him in his preſent ſtate, can have no reaſonableneſs in them, he is put into the moſt likely way of living and dying in a hardened contempt of them. Whereas if you ſtick cloſe to the one true ground of Chriſtianity; and only proceed as that proceeds; and make the unbeliever no offers of any other Chriſtianity, but that which is to begin with the acknowledged ſenſibility of the fall of human nature from its firſt Divine Life; you ſtop where you ought to ſtop, and rob him of all power and pretence of meddling with the other myſteries of ſalvation.

The one buſineſs then upon his hands, if he will hold out againſt you, muſt be to deny his reaſon and ſenſes, and maintain, in

in ſpite of both, that man is not fallen, but is, by nature, holy, juſt, good, and happy both in body and ſoul; and that mankind, and the world they are in, have all that goodneſs and happineſs, which they could be ſuppoſed to have from an infinitely good and happy God, who can will nothing in the creature but goodneſs and happineſs. Here you bring the Deiſt to his proper work, and all the contradiction to ſenſe and reaſon will lie on his ſide: you ſet Chriſtianity upon its true ground; and whoever thus defends it, as it ought to be defended, not only does juſtice to the Chriſtian cauſe, but acts the moſt kind and friendly part towards thoſe who oppoſe it, merely through a miſunderſtanding of its *true ground and nature*; which I will venture to ſay is the caſe of all the ſober well-meaning Deiſts. For *Deiſm* has no natural foundation, or ground of its own, to ſtand upon; it does not grow from any root or ſtrength within itſelf, but is what it is merely from the *bad ſtate* of Chriſtendom, and the *miſerable uſe* that heatheniſh learning, and worldly policy, have made of the Goſpel. If Deiſm ſeems to itſelf to be *ſtrong and well-grounded*, it is merely becauſe it can ſo eaſily object to church-doctrines, and ſcholaſtic opinions: if it ſeems to itſelf to be *good*, it is becauſe

it can ſo eaſily lay open the evils which Chriſtians and churches bring upon one another: if it ſeems to itſelf to be *highly rational*, it is becauſe it thinks itſelf free from that number of abſurdities and contradictions, which Chriſtian churches lay to the charge of one another: laſtly, if it keeps off all fearful forebodings of the conſequences of not receiving the Goſpel, it is becauſe it ſo plainly ſees, that Chriſtians ſay, *Hail, maſter*, kiſs the Goſpel, and then break every part of it.

This is the true height, and depth, and total ſtrength of Deiſm or infidelity: it never had any other ſupport in myſelf but this; nor did I ever converſe with a Deiſt, who carried the matter higher or further than this, to ſupport the cauſe. Hence it is, that you made ſo ſpeedy a convert of me, by ſhowing me ſuch a Chriſtianity as I never heard of before; and ſtript of every thing that gave me power to oppoſe it. Had you proceeded in the way practiſed by moſt defenders of the Goſpel, you had left me juſt as you found me, if not more confirmed in my old way. But as you have juſtly removed all controverſy about doctrines from the merits of the cauſe, and ſhown that it all lies in this one ſhort, plain, and deciſive point, namely, the fall of man; a fall proved

proved and demonſtrated to all my ſenſes and reaſon, by every height and depth of nature, by every kind of miſery, evil, and ſin in the world, by every thing we know of God, ourſelves, and the world we live in; the ground and foundation of Chriſtianity is undeniable, and no one can be too ſpeedy a convert to the belief of it. And as you have alſo ſhown, that the whole nature of the Goſpel Redemption means nothing but the one, true, and only poſſible way of delivering man from his miſerable ſtate in this world; Chriſtianity is proved to be the moſt intelligible and deſirable thing that the heart of man can think of. And thus, contrary to all expectation, the tables are quite turned; *Deiſm* can no longer *be founded on argument*, and Chriſtianity is as ſelf-evident as our ſenſes: all learning on both ſides, either for or againſt it, is inſignificant; Chriſtianity ſtands upon a bottom quite ſuperior to it, and may be the ſure poſſeſſion of every *plain man*, who has ſenſe enough to know whether he is happy or unhappy, good or evil. For this natural knowledge, if adhered to, is every man's *ſure* guide to that *one ſalvation* preached by the Goſpel; which Goſpel ſtands in no more need of learning and critical art *now*, than it did when *Chriſt* was preaching it

upon earth. How abſurd would it have been for any critics in *Greek* and *Hebrew*, to have followed *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles, as neceſſary explainers of their hard words, which called for nothing in the hearers but penitent hearts turned to God; and declared, that they only who *were of God, could hear the word of God!* How ſtrange, that *Chriſt* ſhould chuſe only illiterate men to preach the Goſpel of the kingdom of God, if only great ſcholars could rightly underſtand what they ſaid! Again, ſuppoſing only learned men to have the true fitneſs to underſtand the word of Scripture, and that the plain man is to receive it from them; how muſt he know, which are the ſcholars that have the right knowledge? from whence is he to have this information? for no one need be told, that ever ſince learning has borne rule in the church, learned doctors have contradicted and condemned one another in every eſſential point of the Chriſtian doctrine: thouſands of learned men tell the illiterate, they are loſt in this or that church; and thouſands of learned men tell them, they are loſt, if they leave it. If, therefore, Chriſtianity is in the hands of ſcholars, how muſt the plain man come at it? muſt he, though unable to underſtand the Scriptures, for want of learning, tell which learned

man

man is in the right, and which is not? if ſo, the unlearned man has much the greateſt ability, ſince he is to do that for ſcholars, which they cannot do for themſelves.

But the truth of the matter is this: Chriſtian Redemption is God's mercy to all mankind; but it could not be ſo, if every fallen man, *as ſuch*, had not ſome fitneſs and capacity to lay hold of it. It muſt have no dependence upon times and places, or the ages and ſeveral conditions of the world, or any outward circumſtance of life; as the firſt man partook of it, ſo muſt the laſt; the learned linguiſt, and the blind, the deaf and dumb, have but one and the ſame common way of finding life in it: and he that writes large commentaries upon the whole bible, muſt be ſaved by *ſomething* full as different from book-knowledge, as they were, who lived when there was neither book nor any alphabet in the world.

For this ſalvation, which is God's mercy to the fallen ſoul of man, merely *as fallen*, muſt be ſomething that *meets* every man; and to which every man, as fallen, has *ſomething* that directs him to turn: for as the fall of man is the reaſon of this mercy, ſo the fall muſt be the guide to it; the want muſt ſhew the thing that is wanted. And, therefore, the manifeſtation of this one

ſalvation,

ſalvation, or mercy to man, muſt have a nature ſuitable, not to this or that great reader of hiſtory, or able critic in Hebrew roots and Greek phraſes, but ſuitable to the common ſtate and condition of every ſon of Adam: it muſt be ſomething as grounded in human nature, as the fall itſelf is, which wants no art to make it known, but to which the common nature of man is the only guide in one man, as well as another. Now this *ſomething*, which is thus obvious to every man, and which opens the way to Chriſtian Redemption in every ſoul, is *a ſenſe of the vanity and miſery of this world; and a prayer of faith and hope to God, to be raiſed to a better ſtate.*

Now in this *ſenſibility*, which every man's own nature leads him into, lies the whole of man's ſalvation; here the *mercy* of God, and the *miſery* of man, are met together; here the *Fall* and the *Redemption* kiſs each other. This is the Chriſtianity which is as old as the *fall*; which alone ſaved the firſt man, and can alone ſave the laſt. This is it, on which hang all the law and the prophets, and which fulfils them both; for they have only this end, to turn man from the luſts of this life, to a deſire, and faith, and hope of a better. Thus does the whole of Chriſtian Redemption, conſidered on the

part

part of man, ſtand in this degree of nearneſs and plainneſs to all mankind; it is as ſimple and plain as the feeling our own evil and miſery, and as natural as the deſire of being ſaved and delivered from it.

This is the Chriſtianity which every man muſt firſt be made ſenſible of, not from hearſay, but as a growth or degree of life within himſelf, before he can have any fitneſs, or the leaſt pretence, to judge or ſpeak a word about the further myſteries of the Goſpel. But here I ſtop.

THEOPHILUS. Well, HUMANUS, I have now puſhed the matter with you, as far as I intended; and you have given me full proof of the truth and ſolidity of your own converſion, and your ability to do good amongſt your old brethren. You muſt now enter the liſts with them; not to charge them with ignorance, ill-will, or profaneneſs of ſpirit, but only to try, in the ſpirit of love and meekneſs, to undeceive them, in the manner you have been undeceived; and to ſhow them, that Chriſtianity is by no means that thing, which you and they have ſo long diſliked.

Nothing can be more right than your reſolution not to enter into debate about the Goſpel doctrines; or propoſe the reaſonableneſs of them to any one, till he owns himſelf

himſelf ſenſibly convinced of the foremen-tioned fall of man; and ſtands in a full deſire to be ſaved, or delivered from it. And if that time never comes, you muſt leave him, as in the ſame incapacity to hear or judge of the doctrines of the Holy Trinity, the incarnation of the Son of God, the operation of the Holy Spirit, as *Epicurus* would be. For every man that cleaves to this world, that is in love with it, and its earthly enjoyments, is a diſciple of *Epicurus*, and ſticks in the ſame mire of atheiſm, as he did, whether he be a modern deiſt, a popiſh or proteſtant Chriſtian, an *Arian*, or an orthodox teacher: for all theſe diſtinctions are without any difference, if this world has the poſſeſſion and government of his heart. For the whole of the matter lies ſolely in this, whether heaven, or earth, hath the heart and government of man. Nothing divides the worſhipers of the true God from idolaters, but this: where earth poſſeſſes and rules the heart, there all are of *one* and the *ſame* religion, and worſhip one and the ſame God, however they may be diſtinguiſhed by ſect or party.

And where-ever the heart is weary of the evil and vanity of the earthly life, and looking up to God for an heavenly nature; there all are of the one true religion, and worſhipers

worſhipers of the true God, however diſtant they may be from one another, as to time or place. But enough has been ſaid of this matter.

Let me now only, before we break up, obſerve to you the true ground and nature of *Goſpel Chriſtianity:* I call it ſo, by way of diſtinction from that *original univerſal* Chriſtianity, which began with *Adam*, was the religion of the patriarchs, of *Moſes* and the prophets, and of every penitent man in every part of the world, that had faith and hope towards God, to be delivered from the evil of this world.

But when the Son of God had taken a birth in and from the Human Nature, had finiſhed all the wonders that belonged to our Redemption, and was ſat down at the right hand of God in heaven; then a heavenly kingdom was ſet up on earth, and the Holy Spirit came down from heaven, or was given to the flock of *Chriſt* in ſuch a degree of Birth and Life, as never was, nor could be given to the Human Nature, till Chriſt, the Redeemer of the Human Nature, *was glorified.* But when the humanity of Chriſt, our Second *Adam*, was *glorified*, and become all heavenly, then the heavenly life, the comfort, and power, and preſence of the Holy Spirit, was the gift which he gave to his brethren,

brethren, his friends and followers, which he had left upon earth.

The Holy Ghoſt deſcended in the ſhape of cloven tongues of fire on the heads of thoſe, that were to begin and open the new powers of a *Divine Life* ſet up amongſt men. This was the beginning and manifeſtation of the whole nature and power of *Goſpel Chriſtianity*; a thing as different from what was Chriſtianity before, as the poſſeſſion of the thing hoped for, is different from hope, or deliverance different from the deſire or expectation of it. Hence the Apoſtles were new men, entered into a new kingdom come down from heaven, enlightened with new light, inflamed with new love, and preached not any abſent or diſtant thing, but *Jeſus Chriſt*, as the *wiſdom and power* of God, felt and found within them, and as a power of God ready to be communicated in the ſame manner, as a new birth from above, to all that would repent and believe in him. It was to this change of nature, of Life and Spirit, to this certain immediate deliverance from the power of ſin, to be poſſeſſed and governed by gifts and graces of an heavenly life, that men were then called to, as true Chriſtianity. And the preachers of it bore witneſs, not to a thing of which they had only heard, but

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to a power of ſalvation, a renewal of nature, a birth of heaven, a ſanctification of the Spirit, which they themſelves had received. Goſpel Chriſtianity then ſtood upon its own true ground; it appeared to be what it was. And what was it? why, it was an *awakened Divine Life* ſet up amongſt men; itſelf was its own proof; it appealed to its proper judge, to the heart and conſcience of man, which was alone capable of being touched with theſe offers of a new life.

Hence it was, that ſinners of all ſorts, who felt the burden of their evil natures, were in a ſtate of fitneſs to receive theſe glad tidings; whilſt the rigid phariſee, the orthodox prieſt, and the rational heathen, though at enmity with one another, and each proud of his own diſtinction, yet all agreed in rejecting and abhorring a ſpiritual Saviour, that was to ſave them from their carnal ſelves, and the vanity of their own rational ſelfiſh virtues. But when, after a while, Chriſtianity had loſt its firſt glory, appeared no longer as a *Divine Life awakened* amongſt men, and itſelf was no longer its own proof of the power and Spirit of God manifeſted it it; then heatheniſh learning, and temporal power, was from age to age forced to be called the glory and proſperity of the church of Chriſt; although in the

Revelation

Revelation of St. John, its figure is that of a ſcarlet whore riding upon the beaſt.

Here, therefore, my friend, you are to place the true diſtinction of Goſpel Chriſtianity from all that went before it, or that is come up after it. It is purely and ſolely a *Divine Life, awakened,* and *ſet up amongſt men,* as the *effect* and fruit of Chriſt's *glorification in heaven*; and has no other promiſe from him but that of his Holy Spirit, to be with it, as its light, its guide, its ſtrength, its comfort, and protection, to the end of the world. Therefore, as *Goſpel* Chriſtians, we belong to the *New Covenant of the Holy Spirit,* which is the kingdom of God come down from heaven on the day of *Pentecoſt*; and therefore it is, that there is no poſſibility of ſeeing or entering into this new kingdom, but by being born again of the Spirit. The apoſtles and diſciples of Chriſt, though they had been baptized with water, had followed Chriſt, heard his doctrines, and done wonders in his name; yet, as then, ſtood only *near* to the kingdom of God, and preached it to be *at hand.* They had only ſeen and known Chriſt according to the fleſh; had followed him with great zeal, but with little and very low knowledge either of him or his kingdom; and therefore it was, that they were commanded to ſtand

ſtand ſtill, and not act as his miniſters in his new glorified ſtate, till they were endued *with power from on high:* which power they then received, when the Holy Ghoſt with his cloven tongues of fire came down upon them, by which they became the illuminated inſtruments, that were to diffuſe the light of an heavenly kingdom over all the world. From that day began *Goſpel Chriſtianity*, with its true diſtinction from every thing that was before it: it was the *miniſtration of the Spirit*; and the miniſters of it called the world to nothing but gifts and graces of the ſame Spirit, to look for nothing but ſpiritual bleſſings, to truſt, and hope, and pray for nothing but the power of that Spirit, which was to be the one life and ruling Spirit of this newly opened kingdom of God. No one could join himſelf to them, or have any part with them, but by dying to the wiſdom and light of the fleſh, that he might live by the Spirit, through faith in *Jeſus Chriſt*, who had thus called him to his kingdom and glory. Now this Chriſtianity is its own proof; it can be proved from nothing but itſelf; it wants neither miracles, nor outward witneſs; but, like the ſun, is only its own diſcoverer.

He that adheres only to the hiſtory of the facts, doctrines, and inſtitutions of the Goſpel, without being born of its Spirit, is

only a nominal Chriſtian, and no nearer to Chriſt, than the Jew, who carnally adhered to the letter of the law. They both ſtand in the ſame diſtance from Goſpel Chriſtianity.

It is in vain, therefore, for the modern Chriſtian, to appeal to antiquity, to hiſtory, and antient churches, to prove that he belongs to Chriſt; for he can only belong to him, by having the power of Chriſt, and the Spirit of God living and dwelling in his renewed inward man.

But a learned Chriſtianity, ſupported and governed by reaſon, diſpute, and criticiſm, that is forced to appeal to canons, and councils, and antient uſages, to defend itſelf, has loſt its place, ſtands upon a fictitious ground, and ſhows, that it cannot appeal to itſelf, to its own works, which alone are the certain and infallible proofs, either of a true, or a falſe Chriſtianity.

For the truth of Chriſtianity is the Spirit of God living and working in it; and where this Spirit is not the life of it, there the outward form is but like the outward carcaſe of a departed ſoul.

For the ſpiritual Life is as much its own proof, as the natural Life, and needs no outward, or foreign thing to bear witneſs to it. But if you pleaſe, Gentlemen, we will end for this time, and refer what remains to the afternoon.

The End of the Firſt DIALOGUE.

THE

THE

SECOND DIALOGUE.

ACADEMICUS. I Muſt take the liberty, Gentlemen, of ſpeaking firſt this afternoon; for though I have been much pleaſed with what paſſed betwixt HUMANUS and THEOPHILUS in the morning, yet I muſt own to you all, that I was quite diſappointed; for I came in full expectation of hearing every thing that I wiſh and want to know, concerning *Jacob Behmen*, and his works. For though I have been reading, for more than two years, ſome one or other of his books, with the utmoſt attention, and I every where find the greateſt truths of the Goſpel moſt fundamentally aſſerted; yet preſently I am led into ſuch depths, as I know not where I am, and talked to in ſuch new, intricate, and unintelligible language, as ſeems quite impoſſible to be comprehended. Sometimes I almoſt ſuſpect, that the author underſtood not himſelf: for I think, if I knew any truths, though ever ſo deep or uncommon; yet, if I underſtood them plainly myſelf, I could ſet them before others, in the ſame plainneſs that they appeared to me.

All my acquaintance have the ſame complaint that I here make; but ſome hope, and others ſay, that if you live to publiſh any of his books, you will remove moſt of his ſtrange and unintelligible words; and give us notes and explications of ſuch as you do not alter. Surely a kind of commentary upon him, would reconcile many to the reading of him, who, in the ſtate he is in, cannot have patience to puzzle their heads about him.

Rusticus. O this impatient ſcholar! how many troubles do I eſcape, through the want of his learning? How much better does my old neighbour John the ſhepherd proceed? in winter evenings, when he comes out of the field, his own eyes being bad, the old woman his wife puts on her ſpectacles, and reads about an hour to him, ſometimes out of the Scriptures, and ſometimes out of Jacob Behmen; for he has had two or three of his books ſome years. I ſat by one evening, when my old dame, reading Jacob, had much ado to get on: *John*, ſaid I, do you underſtand all this? Ah, ſays he, God bleſs the heart of the dear man, I ſometimes underſtand but little of him; and may-hap Betty does not always read right; but that little which I often do underſtand,

underſtand, does me ſo much good, that I love him where I do not underſtand him.

John, ſaid I, ſhall I bring a man to you, that knows the meaning of all Jacob's hard words, and can make all his high matters as plain to you, as the plaineſt things in the world? No, no, replied John, I do not want ſuch a man, to make a talking about *Jacob*'s words; I had rather have but a little of his own, as it comes from him, than twenty times as much at ſecond-hand. Madam, the Squire's wife of our town, hearing how Betty and I loved the Scriptures, brought us, one day, a huge *expounding book* upon the New Teſtament; and told us, that we ſhould underſtand the Scripture a deal better, by reading it in that book, than the Teſtament alone. The next Lord's day, when two or three neighbours, according to cuſtom, came to ſit with us in the evening; Betty, ſaid I, bring out madam's great book, and read the fifth chapter of *St. Matthew*. When ſhe had done that, I bid her read the fifteenth chapter of the firſt epiſtle to the Corinthians. The next morning, ſaid I to Betty, carry this *expounding book* again to my miſtreſs, and tell her, that the words of Chriſt, and his Apoſtles, are beſt by themſelves, and juſt as they left them.

And, as I was that morning going to my ſheep, thought I to myſelf, this great *expounding book* ſeems to have done juſt as much good to this little book of the Teſtament, by being added to it, and mixed with it; as a *gallon* of water would do to a little cup of *true wine*, by being added to it, or mixed with it. The wine, indeed, would be all there; but its fine taſte, and cordial ſpirit, which it had when drank by itſelf, would be all loſt and drowned in the coldneſs and deadneſs of the water.

When my Betty uſed to read this, or ſome ſuch words of Chriſt, *Bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*; ſhe uſed to ſtop a little, that my heart might have time to be affected with them, to love the bleſſed thing there ſpoken of, and lift up itſelf to God in deſire of it. But this great book takes this good work from my heart; and only calls upon my mind, to behold the *many parts* which the text may be ſplit into; and the *many meanings*, ſome better and ſome worſe, ſome higher and ſome lower, that every part has, and may be taken in, by ſome doctor of ſome church or other. Therefore, RUSTICUS, I ſent the great book to madam again; and am, for the ſame reaſon, utterly againſt hearing your *Expounder* of Jacob Behmen. If Jacob has

has more truths than other folks, he is the beſt able to tell me what they are; and if he has ſome matters too high for me, I do not deſire any leſſer man to make them lower.

When he, like an Elijah in his *fiery chariot*, is caught up into ſuch heights, and ſees and relates ſuch things, as I cannot yet comprehend; I love and reverence him for having been where I never was, and ſeeing ſuch things as he cannot make me ſee: juſt as I love and reverence St. Paul for having been caught up into the third heaven, and hearing and ſeeing things not poſſible to be uttered in human words.

As I have but *one end* in hearing the Scriptures read to me, to fill me with the love of God, and every kind of goodneſs; ſo every part of Scripture, whether plain or myſterious, does me the ſame good, is alike good to me, and kindles the ſame heavenly flame in my ſoul. Thus theſe plain words, *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart; and ye ſhall find reſt unto your ſouls*; give me, without any expounder of their meaning, ſuch an averſion and diſlike of all vanity and pride, fill me with ſuch ſweet contentment in every lowlineſs of life, that I long to be the ſervant of every human creature. On the other hand, theſe lofty words of Scrip-

ture, *Behold, a throne was ſet in heaven; and he that ſat thereon, was, to look upon, like a jaſper-ſtone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne; and four-and-twenty ſeats; and upon the ſeats, four-and-twenty elders in white raiment, and crowns of gold upon their heads: and out of the throne proceeded lightnings, and thunders, and voices: and before the throne were ſeven lamps of fire, which are the ſeven Spirits of God: and before the throne there was a ſea of glaſs like unto cryſtal: and in the midſt of the throne, and round about it, were four beaſts full of eyes before and behind: and the firſt beaſt was like a lion, the ſecond like a calf, the third had a face as a man, and the fourth was like a flying eagle: and the four beaſts had each of them ſix wings, and were full of eyes; and they reſt not day and night, ſaying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. And when theſe beaſts give glory, and honour, and thanks, to him that ſat on the throne, the four-and-twenty elders fall down before him that ſat on the throne, and caſt their crowns before the throne, ſaying, Thou are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour, for thou haſt created all things,* &c.*

Now theſe lofty and myſterious words, inſtead of puzzling my head, lay hold of my

* Revelation iv. 2, &c.

up

heart, which, all inflamed with them, rises up with the eyes and wings of the beasts in their song of praise and honour; and bow down with the elders that worship the high and mighty Lord of heaven and earth. And thus I want no Hebrew or Greek scholar to tell me this or that, what are the seven Spirits of God, why four kinds of beasts, why neither more nor less than six wings, who were the elders, and why twenty-four; but the *whole matter*, as if a glance of the majesty of heaven had just passed by me, strikes my heart with such good transports of wonder and joy, as make me all longing and desire to be one of those, who are always singing the praises and wonders of the majesty of God. And thus, RUSTICUS, all that the Scriptures give me to drink, whether high or low, is equally a cup of blessing to me, and equally helps forward the growth of heaven in my soul.

Bring not, therefore, your cunning man, that has skill in words, to me; for words are but words: and though they be spoken even by the messengers of God, as angels, or prophets, or Apostles; when they do their best, they can only do as John the Baptist did, *bear witness to the Light*. But the Light itself, which can only give Light to the soul, is God himself: and, therefore, not he that can best speak with the tongues

tongues of men and angels, but he that moſt loves God, that is, that moſt loves *The Goodneſs of the Divine Nature*, he has moſt of God, and the Light of God within him.

Thus ended honeſt old John the ſhepherd. And now, ACADEMICUS, if your learned curioſity could be as much affected with what he has ſaid, as my ignorant ſimplicity is, you would drop all that you had ſaid, as the effect of ſuch impatience, as is much fitter to bring darkneſs than light into your ſoul. You own, that, in the works of *Behmen*, the greateſt points of Chriſtianity are moſt fundamentally opened: and how can you be more ſelf-condemned, than by deſiring more?

But the truth is, you have only heard theſe fundamental matters; you have only received them as good *notions*; are content with the *hearſay* of them; and are therefore impatient to have more of this hearſay knowledge, that you may become more learned in high matters, and more able to talk about the ground and depth of Chriſtian doctrines. You know, as well as I can tell you, that this is your joy in *Jacob Behmen*; and thence it is, that you have no patience, when you cannot come at his meaning, ſo as to add it to your number of notions. And thus you

forget

forget how often he tells you, and how fundamentally he proves to you, that this *notional* knowledge, the treasure of *human reason*, is the very builder of Babel. Whilst you are under the guidance of your own *Babylonian reason*, you can have no good either from the Scriptures, or the writings of *Jacob Behmen*; but will be hunting after *notes* and *commentaries* to help you to notions, which only delude your mind with the empty shadows of knowledge. Would you know the truths of *Jacob Behmen*, you must see that you stand where he stood; you must begin where he began, and seek only, as he tells you he did, the *heart of God, that he might be saved from the wrath of sin and Satan*; and then it was, that the Light of God broke in upon him. But you, full of the power of your own reason, want to stand upon the top of his ladder, without the trouble of beginning at the bottom, and going up step by step. But I believe you had rather have THEOPHILUS speak, than me; and therefore I shall now leave you to him.

THEOPHILUS. Truly, ACADEMICUS, I am much of the same mind with honest RUSTICUS, though perhaps I might not have spoken it so bluntly as he has done. You seem to be in the same error, that most

of

of my learned friends are in, with regard to *Jacob Behmen*, who, though they greatly admire him, yet, of all people, receive the leaſt true benefit from him. They have been trained up in diſpute and controverſy, accuſtomed to determine every thing by the light of their own reaſon, and know no other guide to truth. And, therefore, till, ſooner or later, they come to know the falſeneſs of this guide, they can have no entrance into the region of Divine Light; but muſt be forced to take their part, not of truth, but of ſome ſuch ſyſtem of opinions, as their *birth* and *education* have placed them in. Thus, the learned Papiſt has one creed, and the learned Proteſtant has another; not becauſe Truth and Light have helped them to it; but becauſe birth and education have given to the one Popiſh, to the other Proteſtant eyes. For *reaſon*, which is the *eye* or light of both, finds as much to its purpoſe, and as many good tools to work with, in Popiſh, as in Proteſtant opinions. Learning and criticiſm are an open field to both; and he only has the greateſt harveſt, who is beſt ſkilled in reaping.

ACADEMICUS. I perceive then, that I muſt renounce all my learning and reaſon, if I am to underſtand Jacob Behmen. I cannot

cannot ſay, that I am reſolved to purchaſe it at ſo great a price. I hope the knowledge to be had from the Scriptures, will be ſufficient for me, without his deep matters. I did not expect to find you ſo great an enemy to learning.

THEOPHILUS. Dear ACADEMICUS, be not ſo uneaſy; I am no more an enemy to learning, than I am to that art which builds mills to grind our corn, and houſes for ourſelves to dwell in. I eſteem the liberal arts and ſciences, as the nobleſt of human things; I deſire no man to diſlike or renounce his ſkill in antient or modern languages, his knowledge of medals, pictures, paintings, hiſtory, geography, or chronology; I have no more diſlike of theſe things in themſelves, than of the art of *throwing* ſilk, or making *lace*. But then, all theſe things are to ſtand in their proper places, and every one kept within its own ſphere.

Now all this circle of ſciences and arts, whether liberal or mechanic, belongs ſolely to the *natural man*; they are the work of his *natural powers and faculties*; and the moſt wicked, ſenſual, unjuſt perſon, who regards neither God nor man, may yet be one of the ableſt proficients in any or all of them. But now Chriſtian Redemption is quite of another nature; it has no affinity

to

any of these arts or sciences; it belongs not to the outward natural man; but is purely for the sake of an *inward heavenly* nature, that was lost, or put to death, in Paradise, and buried under the flesh and blood of the earthly natural man. It breathes a spark of life into this inward, hidden, or lost man; by which it feels and finds itself, and rises up in new awakened desires after its lost Father, and native country.

This is Christian Redemption: on the one side, it is the *Heavenly Divine Life offering itself again to the inward man, that had lost it:* On the other side, it is the *hope, the faith, and desire of this inward man, hungering, and thirsting, stretching after, and calling upon this Divine and Heavenly Life.*

Now, whether this awakened new man breathes forth his faith and hope towards this *Divine Life*, in *Hebrew*, *Greek*, or *English* sounds, or in no one of them, can be of no importance: a man that can do it only in one, or in all these languages, is neither further from, nor nearer to, this *redeeming Life of God.* For can you think, that the *heavenly* Life must more willingly enter into, and open itself in, a man that has many languages, than in him who knows only one? or, that a man, who can make High Dutch, Welch, or, Greek *Grammars*, must have

have a ſtronger faith, a more lively hope, and a more continual thirſt after God, than he who can but poorly ſpell in his mother tongue? But now, if this is too abſurd to be ſuppoſed; then, my friend, without the leaſt injury done, or the leaſt enmity ſhown, to *learning*, *ſcience*, *reaſon*, and *criticiſm*, you muſt place them juſt where I have done; amongſt the things and ornaments of this earthly life, and ſuch things as, in their own nature, are as eaſy to be had, and as highly enjoyed, by men that deſpiſe all goodneſs, as by thoſe who fear God, and eſchew evil.

And therefore, Sir, no truths concerning the *Divine and Heavenly Life*, are to be brought for trial before this learned bar, where both jury and judges are born and bred, live and move, and have their being in another world, and have no more power of feeling the Divine Life, than an eagle's eye can look into the kingdom of God. If you, my friend, having read many old Greek and Latin books, ſhould intend to publiſh Homer, or Cæſar's Commentaries, with critical notes, I ſhould have nothing to object to your ability; you might be as well qualified by ſuch means for ſuch a work, as one man is to make *baſkets*, or another *traps* to catch flies. But if, becauſe of this

ſkill

ſkill in old *Greek* and *Latin*, you ſhould ſeem to yourſelf, or others, to be well qualified to write notes upon the ſpirit and meaning of the words of Chriſt, I ſhould tell you, that your undertaking was quite unnatural, and as impoſſible to be free from error, as when a blind man undertakes to ſet forth the beauty of different colours.

For the doctrines of Redemption belong no more to the natural man, than the beauty of colours to him that never ſaw the light. And from this unnatural procedure it is, that the Scriptures are as uſeful to the *Socinian* as the *Arian*, to the *Papiſt* as the *Proteſtant*; and they can as eaſily, by the light of reaſon, charge one another with abſurdities, and confute each other's opinion, as two blind men can quarrel, and reject each other's notions of *red* and *green*.

Jeſus Chriſt is the light of that heavenly man that died in Paradiſe; and therefore nothing in man, but that awakened ſeed of life that died in Paradiſe, can have the leaſt ſenſibility or capacity for receiving the redeeming power of *Jeſus Chriſt*. But *Light* and *Life* have no dependence upon words or phraſes; they both can only proceed from a *birth*, whether it be the Light and Life of God, or the Light and Life of this world. How abſurd would it be, to ſuppoſe, that a man,

a man, naturally blind, muſt be taught grammar or logic, to fit him for the reception of the light of the ſun, and the knowledge of colours? yet not leſs abſurd, than to think, that ſkill in *Hebrew* and *Greek* words can open the Light of God and Heaven in the ſoul. If you, now, ACADEMICUS, can ſet this matter in a juſter light, I am ready to hear you.

ACADEMICUS. Standing upon the ground, that you, THEOPHILUS, ſtand upon, all that you have ſaid of *reaſon, ſcience, hiſtorical knowledge*, and *critical ſkill in words*, is unanſwerable. For what can all theſe things avail, if Redemption is purely a birth of the Divine Nature, Light, and Spirit of God, offered to fallen man; which birth can only be received by the faith, hope, and deſire of *that* inward man, which is divine in us? for nothing elſe can have any hunger or thirſt after the Divine Nature, but *that* which is itſelf born of it.

Now this true ground of the Chriſtian Redemption, gives the greateſt glory to God, and comfort to man. It explains the fact, why plain and ſimple ſouls, having their inward man kindled into love, hope, and faith in God, are capable of the higheſt divine illumination; whilſt learned ſtudents, full of art and ſcience, can live and die

 without

without the leaſt true knowledge of God and Chriſt, and ſlaves to all the luſts of the fleſh. For thus, this Redemption belongs only to one ſort of people, and yet is common to all. It is equally near, and equally open, to every ſon of man. There is no difference between learned and unlearned, between *Jew* or *Greek*, male or female, *Scythian* or barbarian, bond or free; but the ſame Lord is God over all, and equally nigh to all that call upon him. It is told us, as the glory of the Divine Goodneſs, that *it giveth fodder to the cattle; and feedeth the young ravens that cry unto it.* What cattle? ſurely not only to the cattle of *Jacob*; or only to the young ravens that cry in the land of *Judah*. Yet this would be much more conſiſtent with the goodneſs of the One univerſal God, than to hold, that only the ſons of *Jacob*, or the children of the circumciſion, were in the covenant of God's Redemption.

But now, though this one ground of Chriſtian Redemption ſtands in the higheſt degree of plainneſs from Scripture, and is abſolutely certain from the very nature of the thing; yet, till I met with honeſt RUSTICUS, I never converſed with any man, or read any book, that gave me the leaſt hint of it. When I had taken my degrees, I conſulted

I conſulted ſeveral great divines, to put me in a method of ſtudying divinity. Had I ſaid to them, *Sirs, what muſt I do to be ſaved?* they would have preſcribed *Hellebore* to me, or directed me to the phyſician as a vapoured enthuſiaſt. And yet I am now fully ſatisfied, that this one queſtion ought to be the ſole inquiry of him, who deſires to be a *true divine*. And was our Saviour himſelf on earth, who ſurely could do more for me than all the libraries in the world, yet I need have aſked no more divinity-knowledge of him, than is contained in this one queſtion.

It would take up near half a day, to tell you the work which my learned friends have cut out for me. One told me, that *Hebrew* words are all; that they muſt be read without points, and then the Old Teſtament is an open book: he recommended to me a cart-load of lexicons, critics, and commentators, upon the *Hebrew* Bible. Another tells me, the *Greek* Bible is the beſt; that it corrects the *Hebrew* in many places; and refers me to a large number of books learnedly writ in the defence of it. Another tells me, that church-hiſtory is the main matter; that I muſt begin with the firſt fathers, and follow them through every age of the church, not forgetting to take

the lives of the *Roman* emperors along with me, as ſtriking great light into the ſtate of the church in their times. Then I muſt have recourſe to all the councils held, and the canons made, in every age; which would enable me to ſee with my own eyes the great corruptions of the council of *Trent*. Another, who is not very fond of antient matters, but wholly bent upon *rational* Chriſtianity, tells me, I need go no higher than the *Reformation*; that *Calvin* and *Cranmer* were very great men; that *Chillingworth* and *Locke* ought always to lie upon my table; that I muſt get an entire ſet of thoſe learned volumes wrote againſt Popery in King *James*'s reign; and alſo be well verſed in all the diſcourſes which Mr. *Boyle*'s and Lady *Moyer*'s Lectures have produced: and then, ſays he, you will be a match for our greateſt enemies, which are the Popiſh prieſts, and modern Deiſts. My tutor is very liturgical; he deſires me, of all things, to get all the collections that I can of the antient liturgies, and all the authors that treat of ſuch matters; who, he ſays, are very learned, and very numerous. He has been many years making obſervations upon them, and is now clear, as to the time, when certain little particles got entrance into the liturgies, and others were

by

by degrees dropt. He has a friend abroad, in ſearch of antient manuſcript liturgies; for, by the bye, ſaid he, at parting, I have ſome ſuſpicion that our Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is *eſſentially* defective, for want of having a little water in the wine, *&c.* Another learned friend tells me, the *Clementine Conſtitutions* is the book of books; and that all that lies looſe and ſcattered in the New Teſtament, ſtands there in its true order and form: and though he will not ſay, that Dr. *Clarke* and Mr. *Whiſton* are in the right; yet it might be uſeful to me to read all the *Arian* and *Socinian* writers, provided I ſtood upon my guard, and did it with caution. The laſt perſon I conſulted, adviſed me to get all the hiſtories of the riſe and progreſs of hereſies, and of the lives and characters of heretics. Theſe hiſtories, he ſaid, contract the matter; bring truth and error cloſe in view; and I ſhould find all that collected in a few pages, which would have coſt me ſome years to have got together. He alſo deſired me to be well verſed in all the caſuiſtical writers, and chief ſchoolmen; for they debate matters to the bottom; diſſect every virtue, and every vice, into its many degrees and parts; and ſhow, how near they can come to one another without touching. And this know-

ledge, he ſaid, might be uſeful to me, when I came to be a pariſh-prieſt.

Following the advice of all theſe counſellors as well as I could, I lighted my candle early in the morning, and put it out late at night. And in this labour I had been ſweating for ſome years, when RUSTICUS, at my firſt acquaintance with him, ſeeing my way of life, ſaid to me, Had you lived about ſeventeen hundred years ago, you had ſtood juſt in the ſame place as I ſtand now. I cannot read: and therefore, ſays he, all theſe hundreds of thouſands of diſputing books, and doctrine-books, which theſe ſeventeen hundred years have produced, ſtand not in my way; they are the ſame thing to me, as if they had never been. And, had you lived at the time mentioned, you had juſt eſcaped them all, as I do now; becauſe, though you are a very good reader, there were then none of them to be read.

Could you, therefore, be content to be one of the primitive Chriſtians, who were as good as any that have been ſince, you may ſpare all this labour. Take only the Goſpel into your hands; deny yourſelf; renounce the luſts of the fleſh; ſet your affections on things above; call upon God for his Holy Spirit; walk by faith, and not by ſight; adore the holy Deity of Father, Son, and Holy

Holy Ghoſt, in whoſe image and likeneſs you was at firſt created, and in whoſe name and power you have been baptized, to be again the living likeneſs, and holy habitation, of his Life, and Light, and Holy Spirit.

Look up to Chriſt, as your Redeemer, your Regenerator, your ſecond Adam; look at him, as truly he is, the *wiſdom and power of God*, ſitting at his right hand in heaven, giving forth gifts unto men; governing, ſanctifying, teaching, and enlightening with his Holy Spirit, all thoſe who are ſpiritually minded, who live in faith, and hope, and prayer, to be redeemed from the nature and power of this evil world. Follow but this ſimple, plain Spirit of the Goſpel, loving God with all your heart, and your neighbour as yourſelf, and then you are Chriſt's diſciple, and have his authority to *let the dead bury their dead.*

God is a Spirit, in whom you live and move and have your being; and he ſtays not till you are a great ſcholar, but till you turn from evil, and love goodneſs, to manifeſt his holy preſence, power, and life, within you. It is the love of goodneſs, that muſt do all for you; this is the art of arts; and when this is the ruling ſpirit of your heart, then Father, Son, and Holy

Ghoſt, will come unto you, and make their abode with you, and lead you into all truth, though you knew no more of books than I do.

So ended RUSTICUS. It is not eaſy for me, THEOPHILUS, to tell you, how much good I received from this ſimple inſtruction of honeſt *Maſter Ruſticus*; for ſo I may well call him, ſince he, in ſo few words, taught me a better leſſon of wiſdom, than ever I had heard before.

What a project was it, to be graſping after the knowledge of all the opinions, doctrines, diſputes, hereſies, ſchiſms, councils, canons, alterations, additions, inventions, corruptions, reformations, ſects, and churches, which ſeventeen hundred years had brought forth through all the extent of the Chriſtian world! what a project this, in order to be a *Divine*; that is, in order to bear *true witneſs* to the power of *Chriſt*, as a deliverer from the evil of fleſh and blood, and hell, and death, and a raiſer of a New Birth and life from above! for as this is the divine work of *Chriſt*, ſo he only is a *true* and *able divine*, that can bear a faithful teſtimony to this *divine work* of *Chriſt*.

How eaſy was it for me to have ſeen with RUSTICUS, that all this labyrinth of learned inquiry into ſuch a dark thorny wilderneſs

of

of notions, facts, and opinions, could signify no more to me now, to my own salvation, to my interest in *Christ*, and obtaining the Holy Spirit of God, than if I had lived before it had any beginning! but the blind appetite of learning gave me no leisure to apprehend so plain a truth. Books of divinity indeed I have not done with; but I will esteem none to be such, but those that make known to my heart the *inward power* and *Redemption* of *Jesus Christ*. Nor will I seek for any thing even from such books, but *that* which I ask of God in prayer; *viz.* how better to know, more to abhor and resist the evil that is in my *own nature*; and how to attain a *supernatural birth* of the Divine Life brought forth in me: all besides this is *pushpin*. The shipwrecked man wants only to get to shore. Did we see the truth of our state as he does, we should have but one want, and that would be, to get possession of our first created state. There is no misery, but in the evil that is in our own fallen state; this is our shipwreck, and great distress; nor is there any happiness, but in having the first life of God, and all goodness, opened again in the soul. He that is not intent upon this one thing needful, is not a wise Christian, much less a *divine*, or one qualified

lified to make known to others the myſtery of the power of *Chriſt* in the work of Redemption.

But I now go back to that which I firſt ſpoke of; and though I give up all that I ſaid of putting out *Jacob Behmen* in new language, with comments, *&c.* yet I muſt ſtill deſire, that, ſome way or other, he may be made more plain and intelligible, call it by what name you pleaſe.

THEOPHILUS. *Jacob Behmen* may be conſidered, (1.) As a teacher of the true ground of the Chriſtian religion. (2.) As a diſcoverer of the falſe Antichriſtian church, from its firſt riſe in *Cain*, through every age of the world, to its preſent ſtate in all, and every ſect of the preſent divided *Chriſtendom*. (3.) As a guide to the truth of all the myſteries of the kingdom of God. In theſe three reſpects, which contain all that any one can poſſibly want to know or learn from any teacher; he is the ſtrongeſt, the plaineſt, the moſt open, intelligible, awakening, convincing writer, that ever was. As to all theſe three matters, he ſpeaks to every one, as himſelf ſaith, *in the ſound of a trumpet*. And here to pretend to be an explainer of him, or make him fitter for our apprehenſion, in theſe great matters, is as vain, as if a man ſhould pipe through a *ſtraw*,

ſtraw, to make the ſound of a *trumpet* better heard by us.

Further, he may be conſidered, (4.) As a relater of depths opened in himſelf, of wonders which his ſpirit had ſeen and felt in his *ternario ſancto*. Now in this reſpect he is no teacher, nor his reader a learner; but all that he ſaith is only for the ſame end, as St. *Paul* ſpoke of his having been in the Third Heaven, and hearing things not poſſible to be ſpoken in human words. And yet in theſe matters it is, that moſt of his readers, eſpecially if they are ſcholars, are chiefly employed; every one in his way trying to become maſters of him. Thus, when he firſt appeared in *Engliſh*, many perſons of this nation, of the greateſt wit and abilities, become his readers; who, inſtead of entering into his *one only* deſign, which was their *own Regeneration* from an earthly to an heavenly life, turned *chymiſts*, and ſet up furnaces to regenerate *metals*, in ſearch of the philoſopher's ſtone. And yet, of all men in the world, no one has ſo deeply, and from ſo true a ground, laid open the exceeding vanity of ſuch labour, and utter impoſſibility of ſucceſs in it from any art or ſkill in the uſe of fire. And this muſt with truth be affirmed of him, that there is not any poſſible error, that you can fall

fall into in the uſe of his books, but what he gives you notice of before-hand, and warns you againſt it in the moſt ſolemn manner; and tells you, that the blame muſt be yours, if you fall into it. Neither is there any queſtion that you can put, nor advice or direction that you can aſk, but what he has over and over ſpoken to; telling you, in the plaineſt manner, what the *myſtery* is which his books contain; and *how*, and by *whom*, and for what *end*, they are to be read.

There are two ſorts of people to whom he forbids the uſe of his books, as uncapable of any benefit from them, and who will rather receive hurt, than any good from them. The firſt ſort he ſhows in theſe words: "Loving Reader, if thou "loveſt the vanity of the fleſh ſtill, and art "not in earneſt purpoſe on the way to the "New Birth, intending to be a new man, "then leave the above-written words in "theſe prayers unnamed, or elſe they will "turn to a judgment of God in thee.*" *Again*, "Reader, I admoniſh you ſincerely, "if you be not in the way of the prodigal, "or loſt ſon, returning to his father again, "that you leave my book, and read it not; "it will do you harm.—But if you will not

* Of True Repentance, p. 42.

"take

" take warning, I will be guiltleſs; blame " nobody but yourſelf†."

In this advice, ſo different from that of other writers, he ſhows the truth and reality of his own regenerated ſtate; and that the very ſame Spirit ſpeaks in him, as formerly ſaid, *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.—Unleſs a man deny himſelf, and forſake all that he hath, he cannot be my diſciple.—No man can come unto me, except the Father draweth him.—Except a man be born again from above, he cannot ſee the kingdom of God.—He that is of God, heareth God's word.—Come unto me, all ye that labour, are weary and heavy-laden.* For all theſe texts of Scripture ſay that very ſelf-ſame thing that *Jacob Behmen* doth, when he abſolutely requires his reader to be in the way of the returning prodigal. It is not rules of morality obſerved, or an outward blameleſs form of life, that will do; for pride, vanity, envy, ſelf-love, and love of the world, can be, and often are, the heart of ſuch a morality of life: but the ſtate of the *loſt ſon* is quite another thing; and muſt be the ſtate of every man: as ſoon as he *comes to himſelf* and has ſeeing eyes, he will then, like him, ſee himſelf far from home; that he has loſt his firſt Paradiſe, his heavenly

† Three Principles.

Father,

Father, and the dignity of his firſt birth; that he is a poor beggarly ſlave in a foreign land, hungry, ragged, and ſtarving; amongſt the loweſt kind of beaſts, not ſo well fed and cloathed as they are: when thus finding himſelf, he ſaith, *I will ariſe, and go to my Father*, &c. then has he his firſt fitneſs for the myſteries opened in *Jacob Behmen*'s writings; for they are addreſſed to man only in this ſuppoſed ſtate; they have no fitneſs to him but in this ſtate; and therefore no one, whether Jew, Chriſtian, or Deiſt, who does not find and feel himſelf to be the *very loſt ſon* deſcribed in the parable, has any capacity to receive benefit from them; but they will be a continual ſtumbling-block to him. And it is juſt thus with the Goſpel itſelf; wherever it is received and profeſſed, without ſomething of this preparation of heart, without this ſenſibility of the loſt ſon, there it can only be a ſtone of ſtumbling, and help the earthly man to form a religion of notions and opinions, from the unfelt meaning of the letter of the Goſpel.

Secondly, The other ſort of people, whom he excludes from his books, and for whom he has written nothing, are the men of *reaſon*; who give themſelves up to the light of reaſon, as the true touchſtone of divine truths. To theſe he declares, over and over,

over, that he has not his light from reaſon; and that he writes nothing to reaſon. *The rational man*, ſaith he, *underſtands nothing in reference to God; for it is without, and not in God.* Again, *The true underſtanding muſt flow from the* inward ground, *out of the living word of God. In which inward ground, all my knowledge concerning the divine and natural ground, hath taken its riſe, beginning, and underſtanding. I am not born of the ſchool of this world, and am a plain ſimple man; but by God's Spirit and will am brought, without my own purpoſe and deſire, into divine knowledge in high natural ſearchings**. Again, *He that will learn to underſtand the true way, let him depart from* and forſake his own reaſon†. *If my writings*, ſays he, *come into your hands, I would that you ſhould look upon them as of a child's, in* whom the higheſt *has driven his* work; *for there is that couched therein, which no reaſon may underſtand or comprehend*‡. Again, *Reaſon muſt be blinded*, kept under, and not allowed to *ſtir*§. Again, *Reaſon muſt yield up its own hearing and life, and give itſelf up to God, that God may live in the underſtanding of man, elſe there is no finding in the divine wiſdom. All that is taught and ſpoken concerning God, without the Spirit of God, is but* Babel‖. Again,

* Epiſt. p. 121. † P. 138. ‡ P. 141. § P. 68. ‖ P. 9.

We

We muſt wholly reject our own reaſon; it is not available to help us to the light, but is a mere leading aſtray, and keeping us back. This we intimate to the reader, that he may know what he reads. Let none account it for a work of outward reaſon. Again, *ſpeaking of the myſtery*‡, he ſaith, *Pray to God, the moſt High, that he would be pleaſed to open the door of knowledge, without which no man will underſtand my writings; for they ſurpaſs the aſtral reaſon; they apprehend and comprehend the Divine Birth; and therefore only the like Spirit can underſtand them aright. No reaſoning or ſpeculating reacheth them, unleſs the mind be illuminated from God, to the finding of which the way is faithfully ſhown to the ſeeking reader*†.

And now, ACADEMICUS, you may ſee how needleſs it is to aſk me, or any one elſe, to help you to underſtand his works: he himſelf has given you all the aſſiſtance that can be given; he has laid open before you, in the utmoſt plainneſs, both the nature of the *myſtery*, and the *only one* poſſible way that you can partake of it.

ACADEMICUS. You ſpeak often of the *myſtery:* pray, what am I to underſtand by it?

‡ Threefold Life, p. 68. 88. † Epiſt. p. 138.

THEOPHILUS.

THEOPHILUS. You are to underſtand by it, the *deep and true ground* of all things; a *Myſtery* of the birth and beginning of *Eternal Nature*, or the firſt workings of the *Inconceivable God*, opening and manifeſting his hidden Triune Deity in an outward ſtate of glory, in the ſplendor of united fire, light, and ſpirit, all kindled and diſtinguiſhed, all united and beatified by the *Hidden Three*. In this eternal nature, all inward powers, all the *hidden* riches of the incomprehenſible Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, are from eternity to eternity brought forth into outward majeſty, and viſible glory; in which Triune opening of heavenly glory, power, and majeſty, the Triune God beholdeth himſelf as in his *own manifeſtation*, is cloathed as with his *own garment*, dwelleth as in his *own habitation*, and worketh all his wonders of wiſdom and omnipotence, in and by, and according to, the *poſſible powers* of this eternal nature. For this eternal nature is the *firſt poſſibility* of all after-beings and things; for before, or without this eternal nature, all is an eternal, ſilent, ſtill, unmoveable, unperceivable nothingneſs; and this eternal nature is the firſt manifeſtation, the firſt opening of the divine Omnipotence; and in it are included, in its own infinite bounds, all the height and

depth, and extent, of the divine wiſdom and powers. All that God is, and can do, or bring forth from himſelf, is done in and by the working of his Triune Spirit in this eternal nature.

This is the great ſcene of his eternal wiſdom and omnipotence, in which new wonders are eternally riſing up, and declaring the fathomleſs depths of the riches of the inviſible Triune Deity. And to ſay, that God can do no more, than what he can do through and by the poſſible powers of this eternal nature, is only ſaying, that he can do no more than what he can do by himſelf; becauſe this eternal nature is the eternal manifeſtation of the total God, or an out-birth of that which the Deity is in its inviſible power and Deity.

Out of this tranſcendent eternal nature, which is as univerſal and immenſe as the Deity itſelf, do all the higheſt beings, cherubim and ſeraphim, all the hoſts of angels, and all intelligent ſpirits, receive their birth, exiſtence, ſubſtance, and form. They are all ſo many different, finite, bounded forms of the heavenly fire and light of eternal nature; into which creaturely beings, the inviſible Triune God breathes his inviſible Spirit, by which they become both the true children and likeneſs of the inviſible Deity, and

and alſo the true offspring of his eternal nature; and are fitted to rejoice with God, to live in the Life of God; and live and work, and have their being, in that eternal nature, or kingdom of heaven, in which the Deity itſelf liveth and worketh. And they are one, and united in one, God in them, and they in God, according to the prayer of Chriſt for his diſciples; *That they, and he, and his Holy Father, might be united in one**.

This is, in part, what you are firſt to underſtand concerning the myſtery.

But, *Secondly*, It is a *myſtery*, in which the creation and fall of angels, with all its conſequences in them and their kingdom; in which the ſyſtem of this viſible univerſe, *why*, and from *what*, and *how* it came to be as it is; the birth of the ſun and the planets, why and how they come to have ſuch difference in nature, place, and office; as alſo of all the ſtars; the nature of every creaturely life, and ground of its vaſt variety; the cauſe of every inanimate dead thing: a myſtery, in which the creation, dignity, and perfection, of the firſt angelic man in Paradiſe; the whole kingdom of nature, and kingdom of grace; their connexion, difference, and mutually affecting and working

* John xvii.

upon one another under the providence of the inviſible Spirit of God, from the beginning to the end of time; are all unfolded from their firſt root and cauſe.

Thirdly, It is a *myſtery*, in which the ground of Chriſtian Redemption, its whole nature, abſolute neceſſity, and the working of all its parts both in the Redeemer and in the redeemed, are ſet forth in the utmoſt degree of clearneſs; where the whole proceſs of *Chriſt*, as incarnate, living, ſuffering, dying, riſing from the dead, aſcending into heaven, and ſitting at the right hand of God, and governing his church on earth by his Holy Spirit; and all the practical duties of the Goſpel, whether of faith and hope, or of ſelf-denial, dying to this world, and ſtrict conformity to the life and Spirit of Chriſt; are all demonſtrated, from the deepeſt ground of the nature of things, to be abſolutely neceſſary to the recovery and Redemption of the fallen human nature.

This, Sir, is, in ſome degree, the *myſtery* which it has pleaſed the Spirit of God to open in this plain and unlearned man.

ACADEMICUS. Well, THEOPHILUS, I intirely conſent to this account you have given of it, and think it is ſufficiently ſupported by what is to be found in his books; they ſeem to mean all theſe great matters which

which you have mentioned. But then, Sir, give me leave to tell you, that I think it is impoſſible for you to defend what you have ſaid above concerning *reaſon*, or to ſhow the unreaſonableneſs of my demanding *rational* illuſtrations and *comments*. For if this is the truth, that his works contain the *ground* and *philoſophy* of all nature, and all creatures; ſurely they muſt not only allow the uſe of our reaſon, but call for the higheſt and moſt acute exerciſe of it. For what can enter into the reaſons and philoſophy of things, but reaſon? or what do all theſe great matters appeal to, but to our reaſon? I ſee no poſſibility of denying this; and if this be granted, all that has been ſaid about ſilencing our reaſon, muſt be given up.

THEOPHILUS. The concluſion, my friend, that you here think to be ſo juſt and ſtrong, as not poſſible to be denied, is ſo far from being ſo, that it is a glaring abſurdity; and the quite contrary to that one only true concluſion, which you ſhould have made, and which ſo eaſily and naturally flowed from what was ſaid. For if the *myſtery is the deep ground of* all things, of all nature, and all creatures, *&c.* then the one concluſion that infallibly flows from it, is this, that no acuteneſs or ability of

natural reaſon can ſo much as look into it. For natural reaſon is no older than fleſh and blood; it has no higher a nature or birth than *natural doubting*; it had no exiſtence when nature begun its firſt workings, and therefore can bear no witneſs to them. It was not preſent, had no eyes, when things firſt came forth; it never ſtood in the centre, from whence the birth of every thing muſt ariſe; it never ſaw the forming of the firſt ſeeds of every life: and yet the *myſtery*, you ſee, contains all this: and therefore the one plain and neceſſary concluſion is this; That natural reaſon is, and muſt be, as incapable of entering into this myſtery, as fleſh and blood is incapable of entering into the kingdom of heaven.

Behold, now, what a flagrant proof you have given of the vanity, weakneſs, and blindneſs of natural reaſon in divine matters! Your reaſon ſaw, with the utmoſt certainty, that the myſtery muſt be an appeal to reaſon, merely becauſe it contained ſuch an height and depth of a divine philoſophy; and yet the height and depth of its matters is the *one full* proof, that reaſon can have nothing to do with it. This may ſhow you, by what means *Babel* has built itſelf all over the Chriſtian world. For, by the light of this *Babylonian* reaſon, the defenders and oppoſers

oppoſers of doctrines, confute one another with ſuch a certainty and ſtrength of reaſon, as you ſaw, that reaſon muſt be the only judge of the myſtery, from which it is juſt as much excluded by its own nature, as the *mole* under-ground is, by its nature, excluded from the flight and ſight of the towering eagle.

ACADEMICUS. Pray then tell me, How a man is to attain the knowledge of the myſtery, or have any ſhare in the light of it.

THEOPHILUS. There is but one poſſible way, and that is this: it muſt be born in you. All true knowledge, either of God or nature, muſt be born in you. You cannot poſſibly know any thing of God, but ſo far as God is manifeſted in you, ſo far as his Light and Holy Spirit is born in you as it is born in him, and liveth and worketh in you as it liveth and worketh in him. A diſtant, abſent, ſeparate God, is an unknown God: for God can only manifeſt God, as light can only manifeſt light, and darkneſs make darkneſs to be known.

Again, you can have no real knowledge of nature, and its inward working power, but ſo far as the workings of nature, and the birth of things, are working and a birth in yourſelf. Natural reaſon may trade in

the outside of things; it may measure, and make draughts of magnitude, height, and distance of things on the earth, and above the earth; it may make many and fine experiments of the powers of every element: but then this is going no further into the ground of nature, than when the *potter* makes curious vessels with his clay and fire.

To count the stars, to observe their places or motions, is just the same height of natural knowledge, as when the shepherd counts his sheep, and observes their time of breeding.

This world, with all its stars, elements, and creatures, is come out of the invisible world; it has not the smallest thing, or the smallest quality of any thing, but what is come forth from thence; and therefore every quality of every thing, is what it is, and worketh *that* which worketh, by a secret power and nature in and from the invisible world. *Bitter*, *sweet*, *sour*, *hard*, *soft*, *hot*, *cold*, &c. have all of them their first seed and birth in the invisible world, called eternal nature. The irrational animals of this world feel all these things: the rational man goes further; he can reason and dispute about their outward causes and effects: but the mystery of eternal nature must first be opened in man, before he can give the di-

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vine philoſophy of them. For as they all come from thence, have their nature, birth, and growth, from thence; ſo no philoſophy, but that which comes from thence, can give the true ground of them.

If man himſelf was not all theſe three things, *viz.* (1.) A birth of the holy Deity; (2.) A birth of eternal nature; and alſo (3.) A microcoſm of all this great outward world, that is, of every thing in it, its ſtars and elements; and if the properties of every creaturely life were not in an hidden birth in him; no Omnipotence of God could open the knowledge of divine and natural things in him.

For God can only manifeſt *that*, which there is to be manifeſted; and therefore only open *that*, which before lay unopened, and as in a ſtate of hiddenneſs or death. Nothing can come forth from man, or any creature, but that which firſt had its ſeed in him; and to think, that any knowledge can be put into him, but that which is a birth of his own life, is as abſurd as to think, that the tree and its branches may firſt grow, and then be brought to the root.

We are led into miſtakes about this matter, from the common practice of the world, which calls every thing knowledge, that the reaſon, wit, or humour of man, prompts him

him to diſcourſe about; whether it be fiction, conjecture, report, hiſtory, criticiſm, rhetoric, or oratory: all this paſſes for ſterling knowledge; whereas it is only the activity of reaſon, playing with its own empty notions.

From this idea of knowledge it is, that when this *rational* man turns his thoughts to the ſtudy of divinity, he is content with the ſame knowledge of divine matters, as he had in theſe exerciſes of his reaſon; and he proceeds in the ſame manner, as when he ſtudied hiſtory and rhetoric.

He turns his mind to hearſay, to conjecture, to criticiſm, and great names; and thinks he is then a member of the true church, when he knows it as plainly, as he knows the antient commonwealth of *Rome*. His knowledge of the being of God ſtands upon the ſame bottom, and is made known to him by the ſame means and methods of proof, as he comes to be aſſured, that once upon a time there was a *firſt* man, and his name was *Adam*. His knowledge of the kingdom of heaven is looked upon to be ſufficient, as ſoon as he knows it, juſt as he knows that there is ſuch a place as *Conſtantinople*. When he turns his inquiries into the myſteries of Chriſtian Redemption, he looks as much out of himſelf, as when he

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is ſearching into the antiquities of *Greece*; and appeals to the ſame helps for this knowledge, as when he wants to know the inward ſtructure of *Solomon*'s temple, and all its ſervices, *&c.*

This is the great deluſion which has long overſpread the Chriſtian world; and all countries, and all libraries, are the proof of it. It is this power and dominion of reaſon in religious matters, that *Jacob Behmen* ſo juſtly calls the *Antichriſt in Babel*; for it leads men from the life and truth of the myſteries of *Chriſt*, to put a carnal truſt in a confuſed multitude of contrary notions, inventions, and opinions. And the thing is unavoidable, it cannot be otherwiſe with *reaſon*; it cannot do more good with, or make a better uſe of Goſpel doctrines than this: it is *Antichriſt*, as ſoon as ever it is admitted to debate and ſtate the nature of any divine truth, and that for theſe two great reaſons; *Firſt*, Becauſe it has abſolutely the ſame incapacity for Divine Truth, as the man that is born blind hath for the light. Wherein now lieth the incapacity of the blind man, to ſpeak or think any thing truly about light? It is becauſe he is born and bred in another world, where nothing of light ever did or can enter; it is becauſe there is the *gulph* of a whole birth

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betwixt him and the light of this world; and therefore, though he lives ever ſo long, reaſons ever ſo much, or hears ever ſo many ſpeeches about the light, all that he gets by it is only more falſe ideas of the unknown thing.

Now this is ſtrictly the incapacity of reaſon, to ſpeak, or think any thing truly of the Divine Life. It is becauſe it is born and bred in another world, in the darkneſs of fleſh and blood, into which no perception or ſenſibility of God and Heaven can enter; it is becauſe there is the *gulph* of a whole birth betwixt it, and the Light of God and Heaven; and, therefore, let reaſon, from age to age, hear, read, and diſpute ever ſo much about the Light of God and Heaven, all that it can get by it, is only to be enriched with more and more fictions and falſities about the unknown thing.

Secondly, Natural reaſon, whenever judging, or ruling in divine matters, muſt be *Antichriſt*; becauſe it cannot make any other uſe of the myſteries of religion, or do any thing elſe with them, but in the *ſame ſpirit*, and for the *ſame ends*, that it receiveth and uſeth the things of this world. It matters not, what are the names or natures of the things, whether you call them ſpiritual or temporal; natural reaſon can make but one

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and the ſame uſe of them; it can only turn them to an earthly uſe, to worldly proſperity, to private intereſt, honour, power, or diſtinction. And the thing is unavoidable, it is impoſſible to be otherwiſe: it is not a fault that reaſon might amend, if it would; but is as much its own nature, as it is natural to flame to aſcend. Now every thing muſt act according to its nature; every kind of life muſt be for itſelf, for its own good. Now reaſon has no higher a birth and nature, than the ſpirit of this world; it muſt be as worldly as its birth is, and cannot poſſibly have any thing elſe but worldly views, and the intereſts of its own fleſh and blood, in every thing that it can make any uſe of. This is as eſſential to the natural reaſon of man, as to the natural ſubtlety of every beaſt; for they have both the ſame original from the light and life of this world, have both the ſame earthly nature, and can act only in an earthly manner, to ſerve the ſame ends of an earthly life: the reaſon of the one has no more of God and the Divine Nature in it, than the ſubtlety of the other. And hence it is, that man, following only the cunning of his natural reaſon, is often more miſchievous than the worſt of beaſts.

And thus you ſee, how reaſon, ruling in divine things, is, and muſt be *Antichriſt*: Firſt,

Firſt, As it turns the living myſteries of God into lifeleſs ideas, and vain opinions; and, *Secondly*, As it ſets up a worldly kingdom of ſtrife, hatred, envy, diviſion, and perſecution, in defence of them. And therefore it is a fundamental truth, that man has no capacity for divine knowledge, till the particle of Divine Life, loſt in the fall, is awakened; in which alone, the myſtery of God and the Divine Nature can have a birth.

ACADEMICUS. You have carried your point, THEOPHILUS, with a high hand, and I rejoice in ſeeing this matter ſo well proved. But ſtill I would aſk you ſomething, that I know not how to expreſs; I would fain underſtand more clearly, how this myſtery of God, and eternal nature, is to be *born* in me.

THEOPHILUS. Every thing, ACADEMICUS, is, and muſt be, its *own proof*; and can only be known from and by itſelf: there is no knowledge of any thing, but where the thing itſelf is, and is found, and poſſeſſed. Life, and every kind and degree of life, is only known by life; and ſo far as life reaches, ſo far is there knowledge, and no further. Whatever knowledge you can get by the ſearching and working of your own active reaſon, is only like that knowledge.

knowledge, which you may be said to have got, when you have searched for a needle in a load of straw, till you have found it.

For nothing that is brought into the mind from *without*, or is only an idea beheld by our reasoning faculty, is any more *our knowledge*, than the seeing our natural face in a glass, is seeing our *own selves*. And all the ideas or images that your reason can form of any absent, unpossessed thing, is no more a part of your own knowledge, than your drawing a picture of your own hand is making a member of your own body. It is therefore a vain and fruitless inquiry, to be asking beforehand for the knowledge of any *unpossessed* matters; for knowledge can only be yours, as *sickness* and *health* is yours, not conveyed into you by a hearsay notion, but the fruit of your own perception and sensibility of that which you are, and that which you have in yourself. How often have you been warned against this procedure, in words like these? "Therefore let the reader be warned, not to "dive further into these very deep writings, "nor plunge his will deeper, than so far "as he *apprehendeth*: he should always rest "satisfied with his *apprehension*; for in his "apprehension, he standeth yet in that "which hath its reality; and therefore he "erreth

" erreth not, how deep ſoever the Spirit " leadeth him: for to one more will be " given than to another. And this is the " *only mark* to be obſerved, that every one " continue ſteadfaſt in humility towards " God, and ſubmit himſelf, that he may " make the will and the deed as he pleaſeth. " When you do that, you are in yourſelf as " dead; for you deſire nothing but God's " will; and the will of God *is your life*, " which goeth inward even to the opening " of the higheſt myſteries*."

One would have thought, ACADEMICUS, that this advice, if only from the uncommon nature of it, ſhould have had more effect upon you. For it is not only new to you, but to every reader; there being nothing like it, either for the ſenſe, the ſobriety, or the depth of its matter, even given by the wiſeſt of philoſophers to their readers.

Truth, my friend, whatever you may think of it, is no leſs than the *Saviour* and Redeemer of the world. Hear therefore its own language: *If any man will be my diſciple, let him deny himſelf, and take up his croſs, and come after me.* He does not ſay, Let him get a clear and diſtinct idea of me, what, and how I am God and man in the unity of my perſon;

* Threefold L. p. 158.

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he only tells him what he is to part with, what he muſt put off, to be made a child of the Light. Search and look where you will, this denial of ſelf is the one only poſſible way to the Truth: for nothing has ſeparated us from Truth, nothing ſtands betwixt us and Truth, but this ſelf of an earthly life, which is not from God, but from our wandering out of our firſt created ſtate.

God created us in and for the light; and had *Adam* kept his firſt ſtate, he had not been an ignorant blind pilgrim in the darkneſs of this world, but the illuſtrious opener of all its wonders in the light of God. But as this light and knowledge was loſt in *Adam*, ſo it can only be recovered by him who came to reſtore all that was loſt, and who juſtly called himſelf *the Light of the World*. Would you therefore be a diſciple of Truth, you muſt not, with Pilate, aſk, *What is Truth?* or conſult the ſchools, how you ſhall form an idea of it: but you muſt alter your life, put a ſtop to all earthly luſts, renounce all that you are, and have from ſelf; give up all the workings of your own reaſon, and your own will; and then, and then only, are you fitted for that *unction from above*, which can teach you all things. But till Chriſt, who is the one fountain of

Life and Light, be opened in you; it is in vain, that you rise up early, and late take rest, in quest of Truth; for he himself hath said, *Without me, ye can do nothing*. And every son of earthly *Adam*, however naturally enriched with the spirit, and light, and arts of this world, is born, and must remain, a *Spirit in prison*, till Christ is found to be an inward preacher and Light within him. As he is the one resurrection from the dead, so is he the one deliverer from every thing that has the nature of death, darkness, and ignorance. And to expect seeing eyes, hearing ears, and sensibility of heart, from any thing but that *Eternal Word*, by which we were at first made, is robbing God and Christ of more honour, is a more idolatrous departure from the true worship and dependence upon him, than if we sometimes hoped to have good from this or that saint's praying for us. For this is a truth, that admits of no restriction, but reaches from one end of the earth to the other, that as no man can come unto the Father, but through the Son; so no one can come at any divine knowledge, either in grace or nature, but through him alone.

The *schools* of this world are of no higher a nature, than the *markets* of this world; and when rightly used, serve only to the ends of

of this earthly life. But as markets and traffick ſeldom keep within their juſt bounds, but become ſerviceable to vanity, earthly luſts, and all the luxury of life; ſo it moſtly happens in our learned labours; we grow old and blear-eyed, in ſtudies that nouriſh pride and envy, diviſion and contention; and only help our old man to be content with the riches of his fallen nature, and feel no neceſſity of being born again.

Would you, therefore, be a *divine philoſopher*, you muſt be a *true Chriſtian*; for darkneſs is every-where, but in the kingdom of God; and Truth is no-where to be found by man, but in a *New Birth* from above. Man was created in and for the Truth; that is, he was created in the Truth of the Divine Light, to ſee and hear, to taſte and feel, to find and enjoy, all things in the Truth of the Divine Life brought forth in him. And therefore it is, that for fallen man there is but one remedy; it is only *the Truth* that can make him free. Truth is the only *reſting-place* of the ſoul; it is its *atonement* and *peace* with God: all is, and muſt be diſquiet, a ſucceſſion of lying vanities, till the ſoul is again in the Truth, in which God at firſt created it. And therefore ſaid the TRUTH, *Learn of me, for*

I am meek and lowly of heart; and ye ſhall find reſt unto your ſouls.

ACADEMICUS. Pray, THEOPHILUS, ſtop a while: ſurely your zeal carries you too far. All ages of the world have ſeemed to agree in this, that the Goſpel teaches purely the ſimplicity of a godly life; calls no man to be a philoſopher, nor gives the ſmalleſt inſtruction in matters that relate to philoſophy.

THEOPHILUS. All this, ACADEMICUS, is very true; but then, this very ſimplicity and plainneſs of the Goſpel, turning man only from this world, to a faith, and hope, and deſire of God, is the *one* reaſon, and *full proof*, that it alone is a true guide into the higheſt ſchool of divine wiſdom and philoſophy; not only becauſe goodneſs is our greateſt wiſdom, but becauſe the myſteries of God, of grace, of nature, of time and eternity, can no other poſſible way be opened in man, but by this ſimplicity of a godly life taught in the Goſpel; becauſe *only* the godly life hath knowledge of God; juſt as the creaturely life hath only knowledge of the creature, and the painful life hath knowledge of pain. The Scripture ſaith, *that only the Spirit of God knoweth the things of God.* And indeed, how can it poſſibly be otherwiſe? for ſince the Spirit of

of God is the Spirit and Life that goeth through all nature and creature, and only openeth its *own hidden* powers therein; ſince it is that which is the former of every thing; that which makes every thing to have the life that it hath, and to work as it worketh; nothing but the Spirit of God, can poſſibly know the things of God: and therefore, of neceſſity, this Spirit of God muſt be in man and work in man, as it is in nature and worketh in nature, before man can enter into the knowledge and working of God in nature. And therefore here you have two immutable and fundamental truths: (1.) That all our ignorance of God and nature is, and muſt be, purely and ſolely, the *want of the Spirit and Life of God in us:* And, (2.) That therefore the one only way to Divine Knowledge, is the way of the Goſpel, which calls and leads us to a New Birth of the *Divine Nature brought forth in us.*

ACADEMICUS. I have nothing that I can, or would object to what you have ſaid. But ſtill I muſt ſay, that I do not enough apprehend, how the *Spirit and Life of God* muſt thus, of all neceſſity, be born in us; nor indeed, do I intirely comprehend how it is done. Human reaſon, or human inſtruction, I ſee plain enough, cannot help

me to any Divine Light. But ſuppoſe God ſhould ſend an angel to inſtruct me, and that frequently, would not divine knowledge be then imparted to me? And yet this would not be a birth of God in me. Or, will you ſay, that God cannot ſufficiently inſtruct me, even by the higheſt of his angels?

THEOPHILUS. An angel, Sir, may inſtruct you, as the Scriptures inſtruct you; but it is only ſuch an inſtruction, as may direct you where and how to obtain that Light, which neither the letter of Scripture, nor the voice of an angel, can bring forth in you. The higheſt angel neither hath, nor ever can have, any more of a redeeming power in it, than the dead paper on which the Scriptures are written. But you are to obſerve, and mark it well, that you cannot have Divine Light from any other thing, but that which hath full power to redeem you: for Light is not only Life, but the perfection, and higheſt ſtate of it; and therefore nothing can bring forth Light, but that which can bring forth the truth and perfection of life.

Every other thing, beſides the Life and Light of God, ſtand only in a ſtate of *miniſterial ſervice* towards you: whether it be words of a meſſage from God, written on paper,

paper, engraven on tables of ſtone, or ſpoken by the mouth of an *angel*, a *prophet*, or an *apoſtle*; be it what it will, it is only a creaturely thing; and its creaturely ſervice can riſe no higher, nor go any further, than to ſhow the true way to him, who himſelf alone can be the Truth, the Life, and the Light in you. For the Light of God cannot, even by God himſelf, be communicated to you by any creature; and the reaſon is, becauſe the Light of God is God himſelf: it is the Light of his own Life: and therefore only himſelf can bring it forth wherever it is; and no creature can poſſibly partake of his Light, but by having a birth in and from the Divine Nature: for the Light of God can never be ſeparate from the Divine Nature, or be any-where but where the Divine Birth is. And thus you fully ſee, that all that can be divinely known, either in Heaven, or on earth, can only be known in that *one way*, and by that *one means*, by which fallen man can be ſaved; namely, by a New Birth of the Light and Spirit of God within us. And therefore the ſimple way of the Goſpel, is the one only way to attain all the knowledge of all that, which can be known of God and nature: for nothing can manifeſt God and nature, but the Spirit of God working in man, as

he worketh in nature; which can only be done by a New Birth of the Divine Nature, brought forth in man: but when man is thus born again of God, then the Life and Spirit of God is in him, and worketh in him, as it doth in nature. And thus it is, that man can only be a divine philoſopher, when Chriſt, who is the Light of God, and the Light of nature, is revealed in him. Then he is in that living *word*, and that living word is in him, by which all things were at firſt made; and which maketh, createth, and worketh in him, as it worketh in all things, both in Heaven and Earth.

ACADEMICUS. I never expected to have ſeen the Goſpel New Birth proved to be the only open gate to all that *Divine Knowledge*, which any ſon of *Adam* ever had, or can have. But you have proved it to be ſo, beyond all poſſibility of denial. And I now only want to have you go on in this doctrine of the New Birth; for I am perſuaded, you can ſtill add ſomething to *that*, which has already been ſaid upon it, both as to the ground, and nature, and fruits of it.

THEOPHILUS. You muſt remember, ACADEMICUS, that all that I can by diſcourſe, from the beginning to the end of this matter, do for you, amounts only to thus much: it is like giving you a full aſ-

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ſurance of a wonderful pearl of glorious virtues, hidden in the ground of a certain field, and ſhowing you every ſtep of the way you muſt take to find it. Now, if from month to month, you ſhould be inquiring and hearing of ſome new powers and virtues of this heavenly pearl; what good does all this diſcourſe and hearſay do you? You are juſt as far from the pearl itſelf, and have no more of it, than when you firſt heard of it; and would be in the ſame diſtance from it, though you was always, to the end of your life, loving to hear and talk about it. I have had no other end in all that is ſaid of the New Birth, but to aſſure you of the truth of the thing, and the true way to it. Now the way to the New Birth lies wholly in your will to it; and every ſtep that you can take, conſiſts in a continual dying to the ſelfiſh corrupt will, which you have from fleſh and blood. Nothing can make any change in you, but the change of your will. For every thing, be it what it will, *is a birth of that will* which worketh in you. You have nothing therefore to inquire after, nor any thing that you can judge of yourſelf by, but the ſtate of your mind, the working of your will and deſire. Theſe will give you more Light, than all the men or books in the world can

give you: where these are, there are you; and what these are, that are you: there you live, and to that you belong; and there you must have all the good or evil than can be called yours.

For nothing leads or carries you anywhere, nothing generates either life or death in you, but the working of your mind, will, and desire. If your will is angelic, you are an angel, and angelic happiness must be yours. If your will is with God, you work with God; God is then the life of your soul, and you will have your life with God to all eternity. If you follow an earthly will, every step you take is a departure from God, till you become as incapable of God, and the life of God, as the animals of this world. If your will worketh in pride and self-exaltation, in envy and wrath, in hatred and ill-will, in deceit, hypocrisy, and falseness, you work with the Devil, you are generating his nature within you, and making yourself ready for the kingdom of hell. And thus it is, that *our works follow us*; and that *every one will be rewarded according to his works*; and none can reap any thing else but that which he hath sown. The seed of every thing that can grow in us, is our will: the will maketh the beginning, the middle, and the end of every thing; it is the

the only workman in nature; and every thing is its work. It has all power; its works cannot be hindered; it carries all before it; it creates as it goes; and all things are poſſible to it. It enters where-ever it wills, and finds every thing that it ſeeks; for its ſeeking is its finding. The will over-rules all nature, becauſe nature is its offspring, and born of it; for all the properties of nature, whether they be good or evil, in darkneſs or in light, in love or in hatred, in wrath or in meekneſs, in pride or humility, in trouble or joy, are all of them the offspring or birth of the will; as that liveth, ſo they live; and as that changeth, ſo they change. So that whatever you are, or whatever you feel, is all owing to the working and creating power of your own will. This is your God or your Devil, your Heaven or your Hell; and you have only ſo much of one, or the other, as your will, which is the firſt mover, is either given up to the one, or to the other.

For where the will of man is not, there he hath nothing; and where his will is, there is all that *ſomething* which he hath, be it of what kind it will; and it is inſeparable from him, till his will worketh contrary to it.

ACADEMICUS.

ACADEMICUS. Whence hath the will of man this mighty power, that it can have nothing, but that which itſelf hath willed?

THEOPHILUS. You might as well aſk, why a circle muſt be perfectly round, or a ſtrait line free from every degree of crookedneſs. For as it is not a circle till it is perfectly round, nor a ſtrait line till it is free from crookedneſs; ſo the will is not in being, but ſo far as it is free, is its own mover, and can have nothing but that which it willeth. Again, The will is not a made thing, which is made out of ſomething, or that came out of ſome different ſtate, into the ſtate of a will. But the free will of man is a true and real birth from the free, eternal, uncreated will of God, which willed to have a creaturely offspring of itſelf, or to ſee itſelf in a creaturely ſtate. And therefore the will of man hath the nature of divine freedom; hath the nature of eternity, and the nature of omnipotence in it; becauſe it is what it is, and hath what it hath, as a ſpark, a ray, a genuine birth of the eternal, free, omnipotent will of God. And therefore, as the will of God is ſuperior to, and ruleth over all nature; ſo the will of man, derived from the will of God, is ſuperior to, and ruleth over all his own nature. And thence

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it is, that, as to itſelf, and ſo far as its own nature reacheth, it hath the freedom and omnipotence of that will from which it is deſcended; and can have or receive nothing, but what itſelf doth, and worketh, in and to itſelf.

And herein conſiſteth the infinite goodneſs of God, in the birth of all intelligent creatures; and alſo the exceeding height, perfection, and happineſs of their created ſtate: they are deſcended from God, full of divine power; they can will and work with God, and partake of the divine happineſs. They can receive no injuſtice, hurt, or violence, either from nature or creature; but muſt be only that which they generate, and have no evil or hurt but that which they do in and to themſelves. All things ſtand in the will; and every thing, animate or inanimate, is the effect and produce of that will, which worketh in it, and formeth it to be that which it is. And every will, where-ever found, is the birth and effect of ſome antecedent will; for will can only proceed from will, till you come to the firſt working will, which is God himſelf.

And here, my friend, you have an eaſy entrance into the true meaning of many important paſſages in the books of *Jacob Behmen*, like thoſe that follow: *all*, ſays he,

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is magical; the eternity is magical:——magic is the mother of all things.——I ſpeak from a magic ground.——Here the reader muſt have magical eyes.——This hath a magical underſtanding, &c. Vulgar reaſon is offended at theſe expreſſions, becauſe the word *Magic* has, for many ages, been moſtly uſed in a bad ſenſe. But do not you be frighted at the ſound of theſe words; they are not only innocent, but truly good and wiſe, and deeply founded on the truth of things. They have the moſt Chriſtian and divine meaning; are ſtrictly conformable to the ſpirit of the Goſpel, as ſhall be ſhown by-and-by; and are uſed for the beſt of ends, namely, to open the true ground of eternal and temporal nature, and the birth of creatures in each of them. They are to ſhow how the hidden inviſible Deity acteth and worketh all its wonders in both theſe worlds, in one and the ſame uniform way; as alſo, how every thing in religion, whether it be a myſtery of God, a grace of God, or a duty of man, hath its whole ground, and nature, and efficacy, therein.

Now *magic power* meaneth nothing but the *working of the will*, whether it be the divine, or the creaturely will; and every thing that is the work of the will, and is produced by it, is called its magic work, which

which only means, that it is generated by and from the will, as a birth brought forth by it. The will is the workman; and the work is that, which it bringeth forth out of itſelf. So that by theſe words, you are always to underſtand theſe two things, the *working, and the work of the will.* And now, you may already ſufficiently ſee, that their meaning is not only innocent and good, but neceſſarily, and divinely, to be aſcribed to God, as the power of bringing things into exiſtence by the working of his will. For here you have the true ground and original of the creating power of God; how every thing that is not God, is yet come from him, and out of him, as ſo many births of his inviſible power, breaking forth into viſibility, and ſenſible qualities of an outward life.

The firſt manifeſtation of the inviſible God, is that which is called, and is, *Eternal Nature*; which is the eternity of all poſſible powers and qualities of life, the firſt ſource of every natural power that can be in any creature. All theſe qualities of life, in their eternal birth, and riſing from one another by the working will of God, are the outbirth, or outward glory of God, in which he manifeſts his Triune inviſible Deity in a threefold life of Fire, Light, and Spirit; which

which are the ground of all the qualities of life, ſenſibility, power, and ſpirit, that ever were or can be found in any creature. Every thing that exiſts, or thinks, or moves, or finds itſelf in any kind or degree of ſenſibility, is from, and out of, this glaſſy ſea of theſe united powers of life. And this whole manifeſtation of all the poſſible powers and perfection of life and glory, is called that kingdom of Heaven, in which God dwelleth; and is, as it were, his divine workhouſe, out of which he is perpetually giving forth new works, and forms of wonder.

This manifeſtation of God, is a *magic birth* from the Triune *working* will of the hidden Deity, which willed to ſee itſelf in this opened outward ſhow of all the poſſible powers of life and glory; and from whence new worlds of finite divine beings, as ſo many living images of God, might have a poſſibility of coming forth. For without nature, God muſt be by himſelf, and continue an unmanifeſted God. For no *form* or creature can be, unleſs there be ſomething antecedent to it, that can be *formed*. *Life* muſt be, before there can be any finite *living* creatures; juſt as *light* muſt be, before there can be any *ſeeing* eyes. And, therefore, the manifeſtation of God

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in an outward glory of all the poſſible powers, qualities, and perfections of life, called eternal nature, muſt be, or there could be no poſſibility for the exiſtence of any creature.

Now this ſame working will of the Triune Deity, which manifeſted itſelf in an eternal nature, manifeſted itſelf in creaturely forms, all generated from, all enlivened and animated with, that ſame Trinity of fire, light, and ſpirit, that conſtitutes eternal nature: ſo that all intelligent creatures are that in their finite being, which eternal nature is in its infinite ſtate. And thus all of them are from God, and from heaven; live in God, and may work with God, as God is in heaven, and heaven in him; one life, one power, one will, and one happineſs with God.

Now every thing that is not God, but after him, and diſtinct from him, muſt be that which it is, from the working will of the Deity. For ſince it cometh into being, only becauſe it is willed to be, it can have nothing in it, or be any other thing, but that which the working or creating will brought forth. And as all things began in and from this working will, ſo all things muſt go on in it; and there can be no other creator, worker, or former of things,

to all eternity, but the working will of God, either mediately or immediately. Nor can there be any other nature in any thing, but that which is the birth, or magic effect, of a working will within it. And every thing that is done by the creature, every thing which it ſeeks and likes, or abhors and reſiſts, is all driven on by a working will, or magic power, which ſtirs, and generates, and works within it.

Would you know now the true ground of all this? It is this: it is becauſe *will* is the firſt original of all power, and the Omnipotence of God conſiſteth in nothing elſe but his *working will*; and therefore no power ever was, or ever can be, any-where elſe, but as it is in God; and if the creature hath any power, it muſt have it, as God hath it, in its working will. For ſince all nature, with all its qualities, births, and creatures, are all brought into being by the working will of God; it evidently follows, that every creature, with every quality, power, and property in it, is magically born, and therefore muſt have a magic nature, that is, a nature that cometh from, and ſtandeth in a working will.

And now, Sir, you are come into a full view of the moſt important matter of the myſtery of all things; a matter, which, if rightly

rightly apprehended in the inward ground of your ſoul, puts an entire end to all the jargon of a falſe philoſophy, and to all thoſe fictions of doctrines and diſputes, which reaſon has built upon the written word of God.

For nothing is effected by fiction and invention, by any contrived arts or ſearchings of rational inquiries: all this is nothing, becauſe it toucheth not nature, but leaveth it to itſelf; which carrieth on its own works by its own power, and can only work in its own way; and muſt bring forth its own births, independent of every thing but its own working life. But all lieth in the will and working deſire of the ſoul, becauſe *will* began and brought forth all that nature that lives in the ſoul, and is the only life in it; and this life can work and grow from nothing elſe, but that which firſt brought it forth. Hence you ſee the full meaning of theſe words of our author, *All is magical*; and *magic is the mother of all things*, and conſequently, the only opener of all divine knowledge. All which expreſſions only imply thus much, that the *will*, whether in God, or the creature, is the ground and ſeed of every thing; is the generating working power, which maketh and worketh all things to be in that ſtate

and condition in which they are; and that every thing begins, goes on, and ends, in the working of the will; and that nothing can be otherwiſe, than as its will worketh; and therefore eternity and time are magical; and magic is, and muſt be, the mother of all things.

Now here you ſee, in the utmoſt degree of clearneſs, how all true and falſe religion divide from one another. For if nothing worketh but the will, if nothing elſe carries on the work of nature, then all is falſe and vain in religion, but the working of the will; and nothing is ſaving, or redeeming in the life of the ſoul, but that which helps the will to work towards God.

Hence it is, that our author ſo often tells his reader, that when he ſees and finds this magic birth of things, he is *delivered from Babel*; not by running from one place to another, or from one ſyſtem of opinions to another, but by *inwardly leaving* all the workings of earthly ſelf, all the paper-buildings of natural reaſon, and turning to God with the whole will and working deſire of his heart. This is the right coming out of our own *Babel* of vain opinions into the *truth and reality of nature*, where the living God of nature is found, not in notions,

tions, but in the living working of the ſoul, and worſhipped in Spirit and in Truth.

I ſaid, into the *truth and reality of nature*; becauſe nature is the ſtandard of truth, and all is *Babel* but that which worketh with nature; that is, with eternal nature: for as eternal nature is the manifeſtation of the unchangeable God, ſo it muſt be as unchangeable in itſelf and its own workings, as God is; becauſe it hath nothing in it, but what is in and from the unchangeable God. And, therefore, God cannot be manifeſt, or work in any creature, but as he is manifeſt, and worketh in eternal nature; and therefore all that the creature doth, is labour loſt, and a vain beating of the air, but that which it worketh with and according to eternal nature. Becauſe God never was, nor ever can be, or be found, any-where elſe, but in his own heaven, or eternal nature: and no ſoul can by any one poſſible thing find, or be found by God, but by ſtanding before him in the ſame will and working as eternal nature doth. And therefore all is fiction and *Babel* but the working of the will, becauſe nothing but the will can work with nature; and that for this reaſon, becauſe all life, and all nature, eternal and temporal, is what it is, merely and ſolely, from the working of the

will. All things in heaven and in earth ſtand in the magic birth; and nothing can change its ſtate, either for better or worſe, but as the working of its will changes. Juſtly therefore is it ſaid, that where this truth is found, there is a full and true deliverance from *Babel*, that is, from all ſtrife, and zeal, and diviſion about opinions, ſects, and churches; ſince the *one thing* that works either to life, or to death, the one thing that alone opens heaven or hell for us, is with every *individual man*, in every place, and in every age of the world; and that one thing is the *working of the will*. And when, in any ſuch man, his will is turned from his own earthly ſelf, and this earthly life, and worketh with its deſire to God, then all theſe ſayings of the Scripture are true of him; *viz. That he is redeemed from this evil world—that he has his converſation in Heaven—that he is of God, and heareth God's word—that he is ſaved by Faith—that Chriſt is revealed in him—that he is Chriſt's, and Chriſt is his—that Chriſt is in him of a truth—and that he is led by the Spirit of Chriſt*. All theſe texts would be true of him, though he had never ſeen, nor heard, a ſyllable of the written word of God.

For

For the *word* of God which ſaveth and redeemeth, which giveth life and light to the ſoul, is not the word printed on paper; but is that eternal, *ever-ſpeaking word*, which is the Son of God, who in the beginning was with God, and was the God by whom all things were made. This is the univerſal teacher and enlightener of all that are in heaven, and on earth; who from the beginning to the end of time, without reſpect of perſons, ſtands at the door of every heart of man, ſpeaking into it not human words, but *divine Goodneſs*; calling and knocking, not with outward ſounds, but by the *inward ſtirring* of an awakened Divine Life. And therefore, as ſure as that is true, which St. *John* ſaith, That this eternal word *is the Life of men, and the Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world*, ſo ſure is it, that our Saviour and Salvation, our teacher and enlightener, from whom we have every good thought, is *Chriſt within us*; not within this or that man, but in every man where-ever born, and in whom the light of life ariſeth. And indeed how can it be otherwiſe? For if God is the God of all men; and the *word* of God the Life and Light of all men; and all men are capable of goodneſs; and all goodneſs can only be from God; and no good-

neſs can belong to man, but that which is *within* him; then every man muſt have the *word*, or *Chriſt* of God within him, and can have it no-where elſe. All teachers therefore, who teach men to look for life or ſalvation in any thing but the *Word* and *Spirit* of God within them, ſtand chargeable with the blood and death of ſouls; becauſe, in all the poſſibility of things, nothing can overcome that death which is in the ſoul, but the *Word*, or *Chriſt* of God, living and working in it. For obſerve, man muſt have goodneſs in the ſame way as God hath goodneſs, that is, from the Divine Nature; for goodneſs is no where elſe, neither is any thing elſe capable of it; and therefore, if goodneſs is to be in man, the Divine Nature muſt, of all neceſſity, be firſt brought to life *within him*. But this cannot be, till the working will of our heart turns and gives up itſelf wholly to the Word and Spirit of God *within us:* for we can have nothing but that, towards which the earneſtneſs of our will goeth.

Again, ſee here in a ſtill higher degree of proof, the abſolute neceſſity, and unſpeakable benefit of the *Spirit of Prayer*; how it does, and muſt, in ſpite of all oppoſition, raiſe the fallen ſoul out of the poverty of fleſh and blood, into the riches of an heavenly

venly nature brought forth in it. For ſince all things in heaven and earth ſtand in a magic birth, or working of the will, the will is that, which hath all power; it unites all that is united in heaven or on earth; it divides and ſeparates all that is divided in nature; it makes heaven, and it makes hell; for there is no hell, but where the will of the creature is turned from God; nor any heaven, but where the will of the creature worketh with God. Therefore, as we pray, ſo we are; and as our will-ſpirit ſecretly worketh, ſo are we either ſwallowed up in the vanity of time, or called forth into the riches of eternity. And therefore the Spirit of Prayer is moſt juſtly conceived, and moſt ſimply expreſſed, when it is ſaid to be the riſing of the ſoul out of the vanity of time into the riches of eternity: for all the vanity which the ſoul hath, is from its living in, and loving the things of time; and therefore it can only come out of the vanity of its ſtate, by loving and living in the truths, which are the riches of eternity: for the Spirit of Prayer is the hunger of the ſoul; and as every hunger is, ſo it eats; it always eateth that which it hungereth after, and hath a life ſuitable to the nature, ſtate, and condition, both of its hunger, and its food. If it hungereth after the

the things of flesh and blood, it eateth nothing else, and only groweth in the bestial life; and of the flesh must reap the corruption that belongs to flesh: and if it hungereth after God, it eateth the food which giveth life to the angels; it eateth the bread that is come down from heaven; namely, the real heavenly body and blood of *Christ*, which surely may be called the riches of eternity.

All the mysteries of religion, and the necessity of the whole process of *Christ* in our Redemption, have all of them their ground, and necessity, and efficacy, in this *magic nature* of things; and are all of them only for this one end, to help fallen man to have a *working will* towards that first life, which he has lost. And therefore no one joins with the mysteries of Redemption, or can have any share in them, but he whose will turns wholly from this world, and hath all its workings towards God and Heaven. And now, Sir, you see the plain, and easy, and certain deliverance from all perplexity and vain labour in the disputes and divisions of religion. It is but opening your natural eyes, that is, letting simple nature work with its own power, and all difficulties are removed; and the way to God and goodness is as natural, and as free from

from all perplexity, as the opening our eyes to see the light of the sun. For what is so natural to man as the working of the will? and yet he can have nothing, or be any thing, different from that, with which his will worketh.

Nor does this at all too much exalt the human will, or make our salvation not to be the *pure grace and gift* of God to us, but quite the contrary. For the will here spoken of, is not the will of flesh and blood; but that heavenly will, which is the only spark of the Deity in us, given by the free grace of God to all mankind, as soon as fallen, and called in Scripture the *inspoken* word of God in Paradise; which was the beginning of the Redemption, when God first entered into a covenant of salvation with *Adam*, and all his posterity. This *inspoken word* is *Christ*, or the spark of the Divine Nature, which is the Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. And here, in this *Christ in us*, lieth the *will* that hath the *power* of salvation in it; and all its salvation is the salvation of *Christ*. For it is the will of this heavenly nature, hid in every man, that is the working will, that bringeth forth the New Birth of Heaven in us; and therefore is the *pure free* salvation of *Christ*, given to be a Redeemer

deemer within us. So that all our ſalvation, though wrought out by this working will within us, is, from the beginning to the end, the pure grace of God to us, and no ſalvation of our own.

And thus, Sir, you ſee, that every ſoul of man is partly human, and partly divine; is united to an earthly and an heavenly nature; and ſo not only can, but muſt, always work either with one or the other, and has nothing elſe to work with; and muſt and can be, or have nothing elſe, but as he followeth or worketh with either of theſe wills. So that, infallibly to know both your preſent and future ſtate, what you are, and to what you belong, you need only to ſee, what you cannot help ſeeing, *how*, and *where*, and to *what*, your will worketh.

And thus, from this knowledge of the magic nature of things, all which are that which they are, ſolely from the working of the will in every thing, you are delivered from all vain labour and party-zeal; and are brought back to that true and ſafe ground, on which God has placed you to work out your own ſalvation, without any hindrance from any builders of *Babel*, of whatever denomination.

The ſhort is this: the whole matter of religion relates only to *life and death*.

But

But life and death are both of them immutable, and founded in the unchangeable nature of things. Nothing can alter them, or invent a new way, either to or from either of them. To what purpoſe then, is all this dividing into ſo many parties? Why all this ſtrife and zeal about opinions? Death and life go on their own way, carry on their own work, and ſtay for no opinions. Does the *ſtone* ſtop, or alter its tendency towards the earth? or do the *ſparks* and *flame* ceaſe to fly upwards, becauſe philoſophers diſpute and quarrel about the reaſons of one or the other? No; Nature goes on in its own way, let Reaſon ſay what it will. Now *death* and *life* have their own unchangeable nature and working in and from themſelves; and are juſt as diſtinct from, and independent of, all opinions of men about them, as the things juſt now mentioned: ſo that to will and work as *life* willeth and worketh, and to will and work as *death* willeth and worketh, is the one only poſſible way to partake either of life or death. What a deluſion is it, therefore, to grow grey-headed in balancing antient and modern opinions; to waſte the precious uncertain fire of life in critical zeal, and verbal animoſities; when nothing but the kindling of our working will into a faith that overcometh

cometh the world, into a ſtedfaſt hope, and ever-burning love and deſire of the Divine Life, can hinder us from falling into eternal death!

ACADEMICUS. O! THEOPHILUS, you have led me into a depth, that I never thought of ſeeing into.

For this magic power of every thing, that works in all nature and creature, ſhows me every thing in a new view. You might well ſay, that Reaſon has no power in this myſtery; that nothing is propoſed to it: for ſince life and death have their own working within themſelves, and muſt at laſt, when time is at an end, divide and take poſſeſſion of every thing, according as its will has worked either with one or the other; it ſignifies no more to them what Reaſon has been all this time diſcourſing about, than in what language a man uſed to talk. But before you go any further, I beg a word or two on theſe matters. *Firſt*, How I am to underſtand our author, when he ſays, *Here the reader muſt have magical eyes*; and, *This or that hath a magical underſtanding*. And, *Secondly*, That you would, as you promiſed, ſhow, how the ſpeaking thus of this magical power of life, is ſtrictly conformable to the ſpirit of the Goſpel.

THEOPHILUS.

THEOPHILUS. As to your firſt matter, concerning *magical eyes*, I ſhould have thought the thing plain enough already. But you may underſtand it thus. When a *carpenter* cuts timber into various ſhapes and forms, and then joins one piece to another, till it is formed into the ſhape of a houſe; this is no magical work; becauſe one part does not grow from the other, till the whole is brought forth; and therefore there is no need of magical eyes to ſee what this work is. But when an oak groweth from an acorn, or a plant from a ſeed in the ground, here the work is magical; that is, it is a birth or product generated from the working will in the acorn and ſeed, from whence the ſtem, and all its branches and fruits, grow forth; which working will continueth, till the plant or tree hath reached its limit, that is, till the working will in the ſeed hath ſpent itſelf. Now all this is a magical work; and therefore can only be ſeen by ſuch magical eyes, as can ſee into the beginning, and go on with the working of that which works and generates in the tree or plant.

As to your other matter, How this language of the magical working of the will, is *entirely conformable to the Spirit of the Goſpel*; the anſwer is eaſy, becauſe the thing

thing is plain. For the firſt poſſible beginning of the Chriſtian life, is, by the founder of it, expreſsly laid in a *New Birth* from above, and therefore plainly declared to be a magical work, and to have no other nature; becauſe a generating work, and a magical work, are only different expreſſions for the ſame thing. And as the beginning, ſo every following advancement in the Chriſtian life, is as really and truly only a growth of life, or magical birth from the powers of Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, upon the working will in the ſoul; as the plant, from its firſt ſtirring in the ſeed, to its laſt ſtate, is only a growth from the powers of the ſun, ſtars, and elements, upon the working will in the ſeed.

Every thing that is outward in religion, whether it be *men* or *things*, *planting* or *watering*, is only for the ſake of this inward birth; either to direct man to it, to help him to work in it, or warn him of that eternal death, which the will, working according to fleſh and blood, muſt inherit as its own genuine fruit. And whoever fancies the Chriſtian life to be any thing elſe than a birth growing up in God, till it comes to the perfection of the Divine Life, by the ſame way of a gradual growth, and in the ſame reality, as the finiſhed flower has all

its

its perfection by way of a gradual growth from the ſeed; has not a ſyllable in the Goſpel, nor an inſtance in nature, to plead in excuſe of his fanciful error.

For nothing worketh in all nature or grace, but what worketh as a birth, or magical growth of life. For nothing can come from the living God, but life; nor for any other end, but to manifeſt ſome kind or degree of life. There are no dead forms, or lifeleſs inventions, to be found, till you come to the mechanic works of mens hands, and the cobweb ſchemes of dead knowledge, brought forth by human reaſon. For reaſon is the old ſerpent called Subtlety, the firſt and the laſt grand deceiver of mankind; that takes them from the powerful workings of nature, to follow the ſhadows of empty ſounds, till all is ſwallowed up either by final life or death, which will at laſt reap every thing in its own unchangeable barn.

Again; *Faith*, and *Hope*, and *Love*, and *Deſire* towards God, are the only Goſpel means of bringing forth the New Birth; and therefore all that the Goſpel requires, is a magical working of the will.

For all theſe powers, whether of faith, hope, love, and deſire towards God and the Divine Life, are only ſo many different

powers of the working of the will, and have all their efficacy, as ſo many parts of it; and only alter, raiſe, and bring forth a new life, becauſe the working of the will is magical, and generates as it works, and unites with that which it willeth. And thus *Chriſt*, or the new Man in *Chriſt Jeſus*, is formed in us, from a ſeed of Heaven, which is the will that can work towards God, till it becomes a godly birth, as the ſeed works towards the ſun, till it is changed into the birth of a beauteous fragrant flower.

Again; Hence it is, namely, from this magic power of the working of the will, that our bleſſed Lord ſpeaks ſo often of the Omnipotence of Faith; *viz. That all things are poſſible to him that believeth.—Whatſoever ye ſhall aſk in prayer, believing, ye ſhall receive.—If ye had faith but as a grain of muſtard-ſeed, ye might ſay to this tree, Be thou plucked up by the root; and to this mountain, Be thou caſt into the ſea; and it ſhall be done.—Thy faith hath ſaved thee. —According to thy faith, ſo be it done unto thee.*

Hence all theſe truths plainly follow: *Firſt*, That *Faith*, which is in itſelf only the working of the will, is the ſource of all power; and that all that is done in nature,

ture, is done by it alone; and that therefore all nature ſtandeth in a magic working of the will: for *all things could not be poſſible to him that believeth*, but becauſe faith, or the working of the will, is the true ſource of all power in or over nature. *Secondly*, Here is a full demonſtration of the high and powerful ſtate, in which man was at firſt created; A lord over all this outward world, who could, by the working of his will, command the obedience of all things about him!

This was the dominion he had over all the creatures on the earth, in the ſea, and in the air; not ſuch a poor power as invented weapons, or the ſtrength of his hands and feet, could help him to; but a power here mentioned, of ſtanding ſtill, and, by the faith or will of his mind, making every creature to come or go, juſt as the faithful diſciple of *Chriſt* was, by his faith, to have power over every outward thing of this world.

Now all this high ſtate of his firſt power, is undeniable from the words of our Saviour. For it is not to be ſuppoſed, that he would turn mens thoughts to any ſuch powers, as to have *all things obedient to their faith*, or the working will of their minds, if this had not been man's firſt

created ſtate, or ſuch powers as did then belong to it; for no man or creature can have any higher power, than that which belongs to his firſt created ſtate.

And therefore all Goſpel Faith, however wonderful in its power, can only have *ſomewhat* of that firſt powerful faith, which man had when he firſt came out of the hands of God. And faith *now* in a Redeemer, can only be the means of obtaining ſalvation, for this reaſon; becauſe faith was *then* that original high power in man, which could have preſerved him in his firſt perfection and glory of life. Thus, when *Chriſt* ſaith, *Thy faith hath ſaved thee*, it is the ſame thing as if he had ſaid, Faith had always ſuch power; that Faith was the *ſtrength* and *glory* of the Firſt Man, that could have ſaved him from falling under the power of the ſtars and elements; that it was Faith alone which could and did put an end to his firſt paradiſiacal glory, by turning its ſtrength and deſire into the life of this world. Again, when our Lord ſaith, *According to thy faith, ſo be it done unto thee*; this was no new thing, or new operation in the power of faith, but was only a declaration of a truth as old as nature and creature, and was in reality ſo much ſaid of the powerful faith of the Firſt Man;

and

and infallibly ſhows, that as *now*, ſo *then*, nothing was done to him in his fall, but that which was done according to the faith and working of his will. For this is God's immutable righteous procedure with man, that nothing but his own works can follow him; and that, from firſt to laſt, whether ſtanding or falling, according to his faith, and working will, ſo muſt it be done unto him. And therefore man's faith and working will, was his divine power of living ſuperior to, and independent of all the ſtars and elements of this world, in his own angelic perfection of a Divine Life.

For if the revival of faith, in ſo ſmall a degree, as to be compared to a grain of muſtard-ſeed, could bring forth in man ſuch a Divine Power over all the things of this world; is it not a ſufficient proof of the high power of his firſt loſt faith, which only thus coming again, as the ſmalleſt of ſeeds, yet comes with ſuch mighty power over all outward nature, the fleſh, and the Devil? And thus, all that is ſaid in the Goſpel, of the power of faith, is, in the ſtricteſt truth, ſo much ſaid of the power and perfection of our firſt Father, over whom this earthly ſyſtem had no power: but whether he ſtood, or fell, or was to riſe again, all was, and is,

and muſt be done, by his faith, or the working of his will.

And thus alſo, you ſee, that all that was ſaid of the nature and extent of the *magic power* of the will, is not only conformable to, but is the *very ſpirit* of the Goſpel, and the whole written word of God. For from the firſt promiſe made to *Adam*, to the laſt written words of Scripture, man is only called and directed to the true exerciſe of theſe *magic generating* powers of the will; namely, to *believe*, to *hope*, to *truſt* in God; to *love*, *deſire*, and expect the renewal of a Divine Life from the goodneſs of God.

HUMANUS. Give me leave only to add, that in theſe words of our Saviour, *According to thy faith, ſo be it done unto thee*, and other ſuch-like ſayings; he has not only opened the true nature and power of Faith, but has diſcovered more of the true philoſophy of nature, than ever was told the world before. Faith is generally conſidered as a ſpeculative thing, as an aſſent of the mind to the credibility of things related. This may ſometimes, as well in the Scriptures, as in any other books, be called Faith, as the ſame word may be uſed in various ſenſes. But the Faith in queſtion, about which our Saviour ſpeaks, and to which he aſcribes ſo much power, and which

which alone can do a man any real good or harm, is quite of another nature: I say, good or harm; because all that is good or bad proceeds from it, and carries its power, which way it will: as it can work all wonders, and overcome the world; so it alone has power over life and heaven in the soul, can drive them out, and set up the kingdom of hell and death instead of them.

Now this Faith may be thus understood; it is that *power by which a man gives himself up to any thing, seeks, wills, adheres to, and unites with it, so that his life lives in it, and belongs to it.* Now to whatever the soul gives itself up; whatever it hungereth after, delighteth in, and seeketh to be united with; there, and there only, is *its Faith*; that Faith which can work either life or death, and according to which Faith, every thing is, and must be done to man.

Now this Faith is not a matter of choice, so that a man may live without it, if he pleases; but is essential to his life, and altogether inseparable from it. For whatever the life drives at, to whatever it is given up, there is its *living* and *powerful* Faith. Therefore, be a man given up to what he will, seeking, delighting, and acquiescing in whatever it be, temporal or eternal, whether it be Christianity, Idolatry, Deism, or Atheism;

this is a certain concluſion, that every man in the world is a man of Faith, lives by Faith, and that equally ſo; becauſe every man's life is equally given up to the ſeeking, delighting in, and uniting itſelf to, ſomething or other; and therefore every man equally lives by Faith, and that in its higheſt degree. It matters not, whether a man delights and acquieſces in the philoſophy of *Epicurus*, or *Spinoza*; whether he be *given up* to luxury and ſenſuality, or to ſyllogiſms and definitions, to myſteries of Redemption, or myſteries of Atheiſm; he is neither more nor leſs a man of Faith for all this; but is equally under the power of Faith, whether it be divine, earthly, ſenſual, or deviliſh. For which way ſoever the life of man tends, or drives; to whatever he gives himſelf up; there he is, and lives by Faith, and that in its higheſt degree; for no Faith can riſe higher than this. Nor can a man's Faith be any-where, but where his life is, and to which it belongs; nor can he be ſaid to live to any thing, but by Faith. For Faith is as much the one working power of life, as thought is the one working power of the underſtanding; and the underſtanding of man may as eaſily proceed without being led by thought, as the life of man go on without being led by *Faith*; that is, without

without *giving itſelf up to ſomething*, or other, with which it would be united, and to which it would belong, as its deſired good; which, as I ſaid before, is the higheſt degree of the moſt living Faith.

The debate, therefore, ſet up by the Deiſts, about *Reaſon* and *Faith*, as two principles of life, the one appropriated to Chriſtians, and the other to themſelves, is founded on the groſſeſt ignorance of both their natures; as great as that of ſuppoſing, that there are two principles of ſeeing and ſmelling, *viz. Reaſon* and the *Senſes*. And the Deiſt, who turns from all Faith, to have a life of Reaſon, proceeds as much according to nature, as if he was to leave it to Chriſtians, to ſee and ſmell by their ſenſes; but himſelf and brethren to ſee and ſmell by the power of Reaſon. For Reaſon is no more the power of life, than it is the power of the ſenſes; it can no more enter into, mix, or co-operate with *life*, than with the ſenſes; but muſt ſtand below them both, and follow them both, in the ſame degree of inability to alter, increaſe, or leſſen the natural power of either of them, as the eye hath to alter the vegetation, or colour, or ſmell, of the plant on which it looks. For Reaſon, like the eye, is only an outward looker on; and can no more form, or model,

model, or alter the life of the ſoul, than it can alter the life and vegetation of the body. But this ſaying, *According to thy Faith, ſo be it done unto thee*, contains the unchangeable ground, and true philoſophy of *life*, and the power of life. And this ſaying takes in every individual of human nature; and the Deiſt may as well think of turning death over to the Chriſtians, and reſerving immortality for himſelf, as to think of being any thing elſe, either here or hereafter, but purely and ſolely that, which his Faith has brought to paſs in him. He may, indeed, eaſily enough keep himſelf free from all Chriſtian Faith; but, whether he will or no, a Faith muſt do all in him, and for him, juſt in the ſame degree, as it does for the Chriſtian. Let him make ever ſo many declarations againſt the ſuperſtition and blindneſs of Faith; ever ſo many encomiums upon the beauty of axioms, ſyllogiſms, and deductions of Reaſon; his life is juſt as far from being a life of Reaſon, as the Chriſtian's is, who declares only for a life of Faith. For as the *eye* and the *noſe* have juſt the ſame nature, office, and power, in a man, whether he be Deiſt, or Chriſtian; and he cannot, as ſuch, have either more or leſs from them, or be more or leſs helped by them; ſo Reaſon and Faith have juſt the

ſame

ſame nature, office, and power in a man, and are always in him, and will always do the ſame for him, whether he be Chriſtian or Deiſt. And was the Deiſt to change ſides, he would be neither more nor leſs a man of Faith and Reaſon, than he was before; nor have got or loſt any power either of Faith or Reaſon: he would only be under a divine, inſtead of an earthly and ſenſual Faith; and his Reaſon would not have changed its ſtate, or office, or power, but only be the ſervant of a better maſter; that is, of a Divine Faith.

Now, was not Faith the power of life in *every* man, no man could live by Faith, nor could it be the principle or power of life in *any* man. But ſeeing every man, whether earthly or heavenly, is that which he is, by Faith; and Faith will and muſt have its work in every man; and he cannot live without it, or free from it; hence is the abſolute neceſſity of the *one right* Faith in order to ſalvation, and the impoſſibility of any thing elſe to avail in the ſtead of it. Hence alſo it is, that Chriſtianity applies not to the Reaſon of any man, becauſe Reaſon is not the principle of life, or the former of it; but it calls the heart to a right Faith, becauſe man is only loſt and ſeparate from God and Heaven, by his Faith in

in the things and powers of this world. And therefore all ſalvation does, and only can, ariſe from a Faith turned to God; and alſo all damnation from Faith in the things of this world. And no man can turn either to God, or to this world, but by Faith; that is, by giving up himſelf either to the one, or the other; which is the *higheſt* act or power of Faith. For there is nothing that works either to life or death, in any man, but *that* to which he is given up, by *Faith* in it. And Reaſon never had, nor ever can have, or do, any thing elſe but one and the ſame *under-work*, or office, let Faith take which way it will.

The deluſion of the Deiſt lies here: he refuſes an aſſent to the *hiſtory of the facts and doctrines* of the Goſpel; and this is *his proof* to himſelf that he lives by Reaſon, and that it is the real principle of his life. On the other hand, he that aſſents to the hiſtory of the facts and doctrines of the Goſpel, is, by the Deiſt, reckoned to be a man of Goſpel Faith, and that lives by it. But this is all miſtake on both ſides. For this aſſent on one ſide, and diſſent on the other, touches not the matter either of Reaſon or Faith. For both theſe perſons, notwithſtanding this difference of aſſenting, may not only be equally governed by Faith, but have ſtrictly one and the

the ſame faith: for if the things of this world have the heart of both of them, which very eaſily may be, then they have but *one* and the ſame Faith, and are equally governed by it; for they both equally *live by a Faith* in this world.

The Deiſt, therefore, hath no other poſſible way of ſhowing, that he is not as much a man of Faith, as any Chriſtian can be; but by ſhowing, that he has no will, no deſire, no inclination of heart left in him; that his life drives no way, is given up to no one thing, as its end and good; but that Reaſon, without *affection*, carries him only from ſyllogiſm to ſyllogiſm, in queſt of nothing. Then it is, that he may deem himſelf to be a man of Reaſon, but not till then; for if he has a heart that hath any inclination to be *united with or belong to any thing*, then he becomes a man of Faith; and he lives by faith in that to which he is given up, as much as any Chriſtian does, who is given up to the myſteries of Chriſtian Redemption.

I could not help ſaying thus much on this deluſion, in which I have been ſo long enſnared myſelf, and therefore have the utmoſt good will and earneſtneſs to help others out of it. And, to this end, I ſhall add the following paſſages, taken from a book, where this

this whole matter is juſtly ſaid to be examined to the bottom. " We have no want " of religion, but *ſo far* as we want to " *better our ſtate* in God; or ſo far as we " are *unpoſſeſſed* of God, or leſs poſſeſſed of " him than we might be, and our nature " requires. This is the true and only " ground of religion; *viz.* to alter our ſtate " of exiſtence *in God*, and to have more of " the Divine Nature and perfections com- " municated to us. Nothing therefore is " our *good* in religion, but *that* which *alters* " our ſtate of exiſtence in God for the " better; and puts us in poſſeſſion of *ſome-* " *thing* of God, or makes us partakers of " the Divine Nature, in ſuch a manner and " degree as we wanted it. Every thing " that is in life, has its degree of life in and " from God; it lives and moves and has its " being in God. This is as true of devils, " as of the higheſt and moſt perfect angels. " Therefore, all the happineſs or miſery of " all creatures conſiſt only in this; *viz.* as " they are *more* or *leſs* poſſeſſed of God, or " as they differently partake of the Divine " Nature, or according to their *different ſtate* " of exiſtence in God. But if this be a " truth (and who can deny it?) then we " have the certainty of demonſtration, that " nothing can be *our good* in religion, but

" that

" that which *communicates* to us *ſomething*
" of God, or the Divine Nature, or that
" which *betters* our ſtate and manner of
" exiſtence in God.

" For if devils are what they are, be-
" cauſe of their ſtate and manner of *exiſtence*
" *in God*; if bleſſed angels are what they
" are, becauſe of their ſtate, and manner of
" *exiſtence in God*; then it undeniably fol-
" lows, that all that is betwixt angels and
" devils, all beings, from the happineſs of
" the one, to the miſery of the other, muſt
" and can have no other happineſs or mi-
" ſery, but according to their *ſtate and man-*
" *ner of exiſtence in God*, or according as
" they have more or leſs of the ſtate of
" angels, or the ſtate of devils, in them.
" Therefore nothing can be our *good* in re-
" ligion, but that which *alters* our ſtate and
" manner of exiſtence in God, and renders
" us poſſeſſed of him in a different and
" better manner.

" Now, if you was to ſend to the fallen
" ſpirits of darkneſs, all the ſyſtems of your
" *Religion of Reaſon* that have been pub-
" liſhed, to let them know that they have
" the power of their own reſtoration and
" happineſs within themſelves; that they
" need ſeek to nothing, but their own na-
" tural reaſon and underſtanding, and the

" ſtrength

" ſtrength and activity of their own powers,
" to raiſe them to all the happineſs they are
" capable of; ſuch a religion would be ſo
" far from altering or mending their *ſtate of*
" *exiſtence in God*, or doing them any good,
" that it would add ſtrength to all their
" chains; and the more firmly they be-
" lieved and relied upon it, the more would
" they be confirmed and fixed in their ſepa-
" ration from God. And yet, a religion
" that muſt neceſſarily keep them in hell,
" is the *only religion* that you will have to
" carry you to Heaven. May God deliver
" you from this error!

" Hence it ſufficiently appears, that your
" way of *natural Reaſon*, cannot be the way
" of ſalvation; becauſe the want of ſalvation
" is nothing elſe, but the wanting to have
" *our ſtate and manner of exiſtence in God*
" *altered for the better*, or to have *ſome-*
" *thing* of God communicated to us, which
" we *want*, and are capable of *receiving*.
" But if this is, and muſt be, the nature of
" ſalvation; then no religion can *ſave* us,
" or do us our proper good, or ſupply our
" proper want, but that which has power
" to *alter* our ſtate of exiſtence in God, or
" to *communicate* to us that of God, which
" we want, and are capable of. And,
" therefore, nothing but that ſame power of
" God,

" God, which created us, which gave us " our ſtate and manner of exiſtence in God, " and communicated to us that which we " poſſeſs in him, can redeem us, or help " us to that ſtate and manner of exiſtence " in him, which we have loſt, and are in " want of.

" There never could have been any diſ- " pute about the poſſibility of ſaving our- " ſelves by our own natural faculties, had " not men loſt all true knowledge both of " God and themſelves. For this diſpute " cannot happen, till men ſuppoſe God to " be ſome *outward being*; that our relation " to him is ſome *outward relation*; that " religion is an *outward thing*, that paſſes " between God and us, like terms of beha- " viour between man and man; that ſin " hurts, and ſeparates us from God, only as " a miſdemeanour hurts, and ſeparates us " from our Prince; that an offended God " either gives or refuſes pardon to us, as " an angry Prince does to his ſubjects; and " that what he gives or forgives to us, is " ſomething as diſtinct or different from " himſelf, as when a Prince, ſitting upon " his throne, gives or forgives ſomething " to an offender, that is an hundred miles " from him.

" Now all this is the ſame total ignorance " of God, what he is in himſelf, and what

" he is in relation to us, and the manner of
" his being *our good*, as when the old idola-
" ters took men to be Gods. And yet no-
" thing is more plain, than that your re-
" ligion of Reaſon is *wholly founded* upon
" all theſe groſs and falſe notions of God.
" You have not an argument in its defence,
" but what ſuppoſes, that our relation to
" God is an *outward relation*, like that of
" ſubjects to their Prince; and that what
" we do to and for God, as our ſervice to
" him, is, and muſt be done, by our own
" power, as that which we do to and for our
" Prince, muſt be done by our own power.
" And from theſe errors it is, that you
" draw this falſe concluſion, that if our own
" reaſon and natural power were not ſuf-
" ficient to obtain for us all that we want,
" and God requires of us; God muſt be leſs
" good than a good earthly Prince, who re-
" quires no more of us, than that which
" we have a natural ſtrength to do, or can
" do by our own power. And yet all this
" is pure abſurdity, and has all the groſsneſs
" of idolatry in it, as ſoon as you know,
" that God is no *outward* or *ſeparate* being;
" but that we are what we are, have what
" we have, and do that which we can do,
" becauſe he has brought us to this ſtate of
" life, power, and exiſtence, in *himſelf*;

" becauſe

" becauſe he has made us, ſo far as we are
" made, partakers or poſſeſſors of a life *in*
" *him*, and has communicated to us, ſuch a
" life as is in himſelf; or, in the words of
" Scripture, becauſe *in him we live and move*
" *and have our being*, and conſequently have
" no life, motion, or being, *out of* him.
" For from this ſtate of our exiſtence in
" God, it neceſſarily follows; *Firſt*, That,
" by the nature of our creation, we are
" only put into a capacity of *receiving* good.
" A creature, as ſuch, can be in no other
" ſtate; it is as impoſſible for him to en-
" rich himſelf, or communicate more good
" to himſelf, as it was to create himſelf.
" *Secondly*, That nothing but God can do
" us any good. *Thirdly*, That God himſelf
" cannot do us any good, but by the com-
" munication of himſelf, in ſome manner,
" to us. Hence it is plain, that your re-
" ligion of reaſon, which ſuppoſes that we
" have natural powers, that can put us in
" poſſeſſion of that which we want to be
" poſſeſſed of in God; or, that we need no
" more divine aſſiſtance to recover what we
" have loſt of God, than to obtain a pardon
" from a Prince; or, that God need com-
" municate no more of himſelf to us in our
" reconcilement to him, than a Prince com-
" municates of himſelf to his pardoned ſub-

" ject; has all the *miſtake*, *error*, and ig-
" norance of God, that is in *idolatry*, when
" it takes God to be ſomething that he is
" not; and has all the falſe devotion that is
" in idolatry, when it puts the ſame truſt
" in, and expects the ſame benefit from, its
" own powers and faculties, which idolaters
" did in and from their idols. Your Re-
" ligion of Reaſon, therefore, which you
" eſteem as the modern refinement of the
" human mind, and more excellent and ra-
" tional than the faith and humility of the
" Goſpel, has all the dregs of the groſſeſt
" heathen idolatry in it; and has changed
" nothing in idolatry, but the idol; and
" only differs in ſuch a degree of philoſophy,
" as the religion of worſhipping the *ſun*,
" differs from the religion of worſhiping an
" *onion*.

" For as ſoon as it is known and confeſſed,
" that God is all in all; that in him we
" live, and move, and have our being; that
" we have nothing *ſeparately*, or at a *diſtance*,
" from him, but every thing in him; that
" we have no degree of being, nor any de-
" gree of good, but in him; that the Al-
" mighty can give us nothing, but that
" which is *ſomething* of himſelf; nor any
" degree of amendment or ſalvation, but in
" ſuch degree as he communicates *ſomething*

" *more*

" *more* of himſelf to us; as ſoon as this " great immutable truth is known, then it " is known with the utmoſt certainty, that " to put our truſt in the *ſun*, or an *onion*, or " our *own reaſon*, if not equally abſurd, is " yet equally idolatrous, and equally preju- " dicial to our ſalvation†."

And now, THEOPHILUS, if you pleaſe, you may proceed in the matter you was upon.

THEOPHILUS. We have diſcourſed long enough for this time. Let ſilence, recollection, inward and outward retirement, have their work for a few days. They purify the heart; they weaken and diſarm ſelf; they ſtrengthen the Spirit of Prayer; and help us not only to pray, but to find, to love, and live in God. Let us all deſire ſuch an interval as this; and then we ſhall be fitter to meet again for our mutual benefit. My friends, adieu.

† Demonſtration of the groſs and fundamental Errors of a late Book, intitled, *A plain Account of the Sacrament*, &c. p. 161, &c. &c.

The End of the Second DIALOGUE.

THE

THIRD DIALOGUE.

ACADEMICUS. IF you pleaſe, THEOPHILUS, go on, juſt where you left off at our laſt meeting. For this myſtery ſeems to be at day-break with me; and the approach of its light leaves me no power to be content without it.

THEOPHILUS. You have ſeen, that all nature begins and ſtands in a *magic* birth; and is only a large diſplay of its working power in every kind of creature. You now want to ſee further into this myſtery; how eternal nature begins; and how God, the firſt, hidden, imperceptible cauſe of all after-things, manifeſts himſelf in the properties of a viſible and working nature. Now I would, to the beſt of my power, gladly aſſiſt you in this matter, if I could find out a way of doing it, by opening in your heart a knowledge of God, of nature, and yourſelf, without helping you to a *mere opinion*, or increaſing your thirſt after ideal ſpeculation. Tell me, therefore, what you propoſe

propoſe by the gratification of this deſire; or what effect you expect from ſuch knowledge, as you here ſeek.

ACADEMICUS. All that I deſire by it is, to ſtrengthen and confirm the ground on which I ſtand; that, ſeeing the true philoſophy of religion, I may have nothing to fear from all that variety of attacks which now, more than ever, are made upon it by infidel Reaſon. I hope, therefore, it is no vain curioſity, to deſire to enter into the depth of this myſtery, ſince I only deſire thereby ſtrength to reſiſt all the enemies of religion.

THEOPHILUS. All this is right, and very well; provided you do but know who, and what, are the great and powerful enemies of religion. But this, perhaps, you do not ſo well apprehend, as you may imagine. Your own Reaſon, born of, bred in, and governed by your own fleſh and blood, is the moſt powerful enemy of religion that you have to do with, and from whom you have the moſt to fear.

The men of ſpeculative Reaſon, whom you ſeem moſt to apprehend, are powerleſs enemies, that cannot ſtrike at your religion with the ſtrength of a ſtraw. Did you but rightly ſee what their power is, you would ſee it as ridiculous, as that of a few water-

engines trying to quench the fiery globe of the ſun; for Reaſon ſtands in the ſame inability to touch the truth of religion, as the water-engine to affect the ſun. Nay, its inability is much greater; for could the water, thrown from the engine, be made to reach the ſun, it would have ſome, though an inſignificant effect upon it; but Reaſon can no more affect the truth of religion, than *nothing* can affect *ſomething*. If Reaſon ſeems to have any power againſt religion, it is only where religion is become a dead form, has loſt its true ſtate, and is dwindled into opinion; and when this is the caſe, that religion ſtands only as a well-grounded opinion, then indeed it is always liable to be ſhaken, either by having its own credibility leſſened, or that of a contrary opinion increaſed. But when religion is that which it ſhould be, not a notion or opinion, but a *real life growing up in God*, then Reaſon has juſt as much power to ſtop its courſe, as the barking dog to ſtop the courſe of the moon. For true and genuine religion is *Nature*, is *Life*, and the *Working* of Life; and therefore, where-ever it is, Reaſon has no more power over it, than over the roots that grow ſecretly in the earth, or the life that is working in the higheſt heavens. If, therefore, you are afraid

afraid of Reaſon hurting your religion, it is a ſign, that your religion is not yet as it ſhould be, is not a *ſelf-evident growth of nature and life within you*, but has much of mere opinion in it.

Obſerve the word *ſelf-evident*, for there lies the truth of the matter; for you have no more of the truth of religion, than what is *ſelf-evident* in you. A blind man may be rich in notions and opinions about the nature, power, and good of light; and in this caſe, one blind man may perplex another, and unſettle his notions; but when the light manifeſts itſelf, and is become *ſelf-evident*, then he is at once delivered from all uncertainty about it. Now religion is Light and Life; but Light and Life can only manifeſt themſelves, and can no where be known, but where they are *ſelf-evident*.

You can know nothing of God, of Nature, of Heaven, or Hell, or yourſelf, but ſo far as all theſe things are *ſelf-evident* in you. Neither could any of theſe things be of any concern to you, but becauſe they can all of them be *ſelf-evident* in you. For the bare hiſtory, or hearſay of any one thing, ſignifies no more to you, than the hearſay of any other thing. And if God and Heaven, Hell and the Devil, the world and

and the flesh, were not all of them *self-evident* in you, you could have no more good or hurt from any hearsay about them, than from the hearsay of pleasant gardens, and dismal prisons, in the world of the moon.

Let it be supposed, that your ingenious Reason should suggest to you, that there are no devils or hell, and therefore no occasion to believe that revelation which gives an account of them: in this case, do but turn to that which is *sensible* and *self-evident* in you, and then you must know, in the same certainty as you know yourself to be alive, that there is *wrath*, *self-torment*, *envy*, *malice*, *evil-will*, *pride*, *cruelty*, *revenge*, &c. Now say, if you please, there are no other devils but these, and that men have no other devils to resist; and then you will have said truth enough, have owned devils enough, and enough confessed, that you are in the midst of them; that you are every-where tempted by them; and that flesh and blood is too weak to resist them, and therefore wants some kind of Saviour, of so contrary a nature, as has power to destroy these works of the devil in you.

Now this is the only knowledge that you can possibly have of an outward hell, and outward devils; and this knowledge is as

self-

self-evident in you as your own thoughts, and is as near to you as your own life. But to see and know an outward hell, or outward devils, that are outward living creatures, can never be your own case, till all that is divine and human in you is extinguished; and then you will have knowledge enough, how hell is a place, and how the devils of rage, wrath, envy, and pride, *&c.* are living creatures.

Again, Let it be supposed, that your sceptic Reason had brought you into doubt about the being and providence of God in you: you have no occasion to consult the demonstrations which heathen philosophers, School-divines, Deists, or Atheists, have produced about it, from the existence of things; all concluding, as well Christians, as Deists and Atheists, that there must be some eternal first cause from which all has proceeded.

For what a God is this, that is only proved to be, because something now is, and therefore something must always have been, an infinite, eternal something, with infinite power to bring forth all that is come into being? What a God, I say, is this, which the Arian, the Deist, and the Atheist, is as willing to own as the Christian; and which is as serviceable to the cause of Arianism, Deism,

Deiſm, Idolatry, and Atheiſm, as it is to Chriſtianity? For the Atheiſt has his omnipotent, eternal, firſt cauſe, as well as all the diſputers for a God.

But now, if you turn from all theſe idle debates and demonſtrations of Reaſon, to *that* which is *ſenſible* and *ſelf-evident* in you, then you have a *ſenſible ſelf-evident* proof of the true God of Life, and Light, and Love, and Goodneſs, as manifeſt to you as your own life. For with the ſame ſelf-evident certainty, as you know that you think, and are alive, you know that there is *Goodneſs, Love, Benevolence, Meekneſs, Compaſſion, Wiſdom, Peace, Joy,* &c. Now this is the *ſelf-evident* God, that forces himſelf to be known, and found, and felt, in every man, in the ſame certainty of ſelf-evidence, as every man feels and finds his own thoughts and life. And this is the God, whoſe being and providence, thus ſelf-evident in us, call for our worſhip, and love, and adoration, and obedience to him: and this worſhip, and love, and adoration, and conformity to the Divine Goodneſs, is our *true belief* in, and *ſure knowledge* of, the ſelf-evident God. And Atheiſm is not the denial of a firſt omnipotent cauſe, but is purely and ſolely nothing elſe but the diſowning, forſaking, and renouncing the Goodneſs,

neſs, Virtue, Benevolence, Meekneſs, &c. of the Divine Nature, that has made itſelf thus ſelf-evident in us, as the true object of our worſhip, conformity, love, and adoration. This is the *one true God*, or the Deity of Goodneſs, Virtue, and Love, &c. the certainty of whoſe being and providence, opens itſelf to you in the ſelf-evident ſenſibility of your own nature; and inſpires his likeneſs, and love of his Goodneſs, into you. And as this is the only true knowledge that you can poſſibly have of God and the Divine Nature, ſo it is a knowledge not to be debated, or leſſened by any objections of Reaſon, but is as ſelf-evident as your own life. But to find or know God in reality, by any outward proofs, or by any thing but by God himſelf made manifeſt and ſelf-evident in you, will never be your caſe either here or hereafter. For neither God, nor heaven, nor hell, nor the devil, nor the world, nor the fleſh, can be any otherwiſe knowable in you, or by you, but by their own exiſtence and manifeſtation in you. And all pretended knowledge of any of theſe things, beyond or without this ſelf-evident ſenſibility of their birth within you, is only ſuch knowledge of them, as the blind man hath of that light which never entered into him.

And

And as this is our only true knowledge, ſo every man is, by his birth and nature, brought into a certain and ſelf-evident ſenſibility of all theſe things. And if we bring ourſelves by reaſoning and diſpute into an uncertainty about them, it is an uncertainty that we have created for ourſelves, and comes not from God and Nature. For God and Nature have made that which is our greateſt concern, to be our greateſt certainty; and to be known by us in the ſame ſelf-evidence, as our own pain or pleaſure is. For nothing is Religion, or the truth of Religion, nothing is good or bad to you, but that which is a ſelf-evident birth within you. So that if you call that only God, and Religion, and Goodneſs, which truly are ſo, and can only be known by their ſelf-evident powers and life in you, then you are in the Truth, and the Truth will make you free from all doubts; and you will no more fear or regard any thing, that talkative Reaſon can diſcourſe againſt it, than againſt your own ſeeing, hearing, or ſenſible life. But if you turn from *ſelf-evidence*, to *Reaſon* and *opinion*, you turn from the *Tree of Life*, and you give yourſelf up to certain deluſion.

Wonder not, therefore, my friend, that though the myſtery under conſideration contains the greateſt of truths, yet I am unwilling

willing to help you to reaſon and ſpeculate upon it; for if you attempt to go further in it, than ſelf-evidence leads you, you only go ſo far out of it, or from it. For the end of this myſtery, is not to furniſh new or better matter for reaſon and opinion, but to bring man home to that *ſenſibility* which is ſelf-evident in himſelf, and to lead him only by ſelf-evident principles, to ſee, and find, and feel the difference between true and falſe Religion, in the ſame degree of ſelf-evident certainty, as he ſees and feels the difference between fire and water. This, I ſay, is the great intent of this myſtery, to bring man into a ſenſibility of God and Nature, to know and feel, that good and evil, life and death, are a ſelf-evident growth and birth of nature in man, according as his will enters into, and works with that which is unchangeably good, or unchangeably evil, in the working of nature. Now as the workings of nature are unchangeable in their effects, and that which is naturally good or evil, muſt be always ſo; and ſeeing man's life ſtandeth in nature, and muſt work with it, muſt have only that good or evil which is unchangeable in nature; and ſeeing his ſtate in nature, whether good or evil, is, and can be, *only that*, which the ſenſible, ſelf-evident powers of his

his own life manifeſt to him; then you ſee the fitneſs and neceſſity of your keeping ſteadily to that, which is *ſelf-evident* in you, as the very *Tree of Life*, the criterion of all that Truth and Goodneſs which belongs to you. *Secondly*, You ſee with what good Reaſon *Jacob Behmen* ſo often tells you, That all he has written, was only to *help man to ſeek and find himſelf*, to ſee and know his *place* and *ſtate* in nature, and how to co-operate with God and Nature in generating a birth of Heaven within himſelf. *Thirdly*, You may ſee how you and I ſhould abuſe this bleſſed myſtery, ſhould we, inſtead of only and truly ſeeking and finding its birth within us, make it a matter of reaſoning and opinion.

ACADEMICUS. I have neither power nor inclination to object to any thing that you have ſaid. But ſtill I muſt deſire you to aſſiſt me, in your own way, and ſuch as you judge to be ſuitable to the intention of this myſtery. I plainly ſee, that the whole ground of Religion lies in the knowledge of what God is in himſelf, as diſtinct from Nature; what Nature is in itſelf; what I have from God, and what I am in and from Nature; and how I am to work with it, as God himſelf is and worketh in Nature. For if this knowledge can be opened in me, then

then the *why*, and the *how*, of every myſtery of Redemption muſt be ſeen to the bottom.

THEOPHILUS. By Nature are meant, *all the working ſtirring properties of life*, or all the various ſenſibilities which life is capable of finding and feeling in itſelf. And, therefore, you need only look at the working ſenſibilities of your own life, the ſeveral kinds and ways of feeling and finding your own ſtate, to know, by a *ſelf-evident* certainty, what Nature is in itſelf. And thus alſo, in the ſame ſelf-evident certainty, you may know, that Nature is not God. For as you find, that Nature is opened in you; that all its properties have their exiſtence in you; and yet that none of theſe properties of life are their own happineſs, or can make themſelves to be happy, full of peace, delight, and joy, and free from every want; ſo you have a full ſelf-evident proof, that God is not Nature, but intirely diſtinct from, and ſuperior to Nature; and that, as conſidered in himſelf, he is *That* which alone can make Nature happy, free from want, and full of all delightful ſatisfaction. And thus you know, not from hearſay, but from a ſelf-evident certainty in yourſelf, that God, conſidered as in himſelf, is the *happineſs*, the *reſt*, the *ſatisfaction*, the *joy*, the *fulfilling*

of all the properties and ſenſibilities of Nature; and alſo that Nature, in itſelf, is that working life of various properties and ſenſibilities, which *want* to be made happy, which *reach* after ſomething that they are not, and have not, and which cannot be happy or fulfilled, till ſomething of an higher nature than themſelves be united with them; that is, the working of Nature muſt be in want, in pain, and diſſatisfaction, till God (the bleſſing and fulfilling of Nature) is manifeſted, found, and enjoyed in it.

Now ſuppoſe you knew no more of what God is in himſelf, diſtinct from Nature, and what Nature is as thus diſtinguiſhed from God, than is already opened in you, you would know enough to be a key to all that which *Jacob Behmen* ſpeaks of God, and of Nature; and enough alſo to ſhow you, how to co-operate with God and Nature, in bringing forth a New Birth of the Divine Life within you. For as ſoon as you know, that Nature in itſelf is only a working life of various ſenſibilities, which wants ſomething diſtinct from itſelf, and higher than itſelf, to make it happy, then you have a ſelf-evident certainty of theſe following truths: *Firſt*, That God, conſidered as in himſelf, is the bleſſing, the ſatisfaction, the Heaven, and happineſs, of all and every ſenſibility of Nature.

ture. *Secondly*, That therefore, as the Gospel teaches, only the *Word*, the *Light*, the Son of God, or *Jesus Christ*, can redeem fallen Nature, restore it to its first state of blessedness in God. *Thirdly*, That therefore, as the Gospel teaches, you have but *one thing* to do, and *that* one thing absolutely necessary to be done; *viz.* to *deny yourself*; that is, to turn this fallen Nature from itself, from all its own wills and workings in the vanity of this life, to give up itself in faith in hunger and thirst after that Light, *Word*, Son, or *Jesus Christ* of God, who is the fulness, the satisfaction, the joy, and blessedness, of all Nature; who alone can turn every working and sensibility of Nature into a participation of heavenly satisfaction and joy. Now what can you desire, or need to know of God, of Nature, and the mystery of Christian Redemption, more than this? And yet all this is a self-evident knowledge, born within you as soon as you turn to it.

ACADEMICUS. O! Sir, you quite transport me with this short, easy, and yet full explication of so great a matter, which has often perplexed me. But now I shall never be at a loss, how to understand the distinction between God and Nature, and also the absolute necessity of it; which, when

rightly known, ſets all the doctrines and myſteries of Chriſtian Redemption upon ſuch a ground, as cannot be removed. But ſtill I muſt beg of you, to help me to the ſame ſelf-evidence of the birth and generation of the properties of nature, as they are ſet forth by *Jacob Behmen*, eſpecially of the Three firſt forms, which I perceive to be the ground of all; and yet their birth and generation, their union with, and diſtinction from, one another, I do not enough comprehend, as he ſets them forth. Thus, the firſt *form* of Nature is ſaid to be *Deſire*; which is the ground and foundation of all things. This deſire (the firſt property) he ſaith, is *aſtringing*, *drawing*, *ſhutting up*, *compreſſing*, *hardening*, &c. Now all this is evident enough; for I have a ſufficient ſenſibility, that this is the nature of Deſire; that, in its ſpiritual way, it attracts, draws, compreſſes, and would ſhut up, or incloſe, *&c.* But then, it is immediately ſaid, that the ſecond property is *attraction*, *drawing*, *ſting*, and *motion*, &c. Now if the firſt is *attraction* and *drawing*, how can the ſecond be different from it, and yet be attraction and drawing?

THEOPHILUS. The Deſire is not one *property*, but is in itſelf all the properties of Nature; it is the ground in which they all dwell,

dwell, and the mother out of which they are all born: ſo that all that is ſaid of the Three Firſt Forms of Nature, is only ſo much ſaid of Three Forms or Properties of the Deſire. For the Deſire is not the firſt property of Nature; but every property hath all that it hath in and from the Deſire. The firſt property of the Deſire, or that which is the peculiarity of its nature, as diſtinguiſhed from the ſecond, is, to *compreſs*, *incloſe*, *ſhut up*, &c. whence cometh *thickneſs*, *darkneſs*, *hardneſs*, &c. But no ſooner does the deſire begin to compreſs, ſhut up, *&c.* but it brings forth its own greateſt enemy, and the higheſt reſiſtance to itſelf: for it cannot *compreſs* or *thicken*, but by drawing or attracting; but drawing and attracting is quite contrary to ſhutting up, or compreſſing; becauſe drawing or attracting is *motion*, and every motion is contrary to ſhutting up or compreſſing together.

And thus your difficulty is removed: attraction or drawing is rightly aſcribed to the Deſire, and rightly called its Second Property, becauſe it is born of it; and yet is directly contrary to that which is the Deſire's firſt property or intention; *viz.* to *compreſs*, to *hold in ſtillneſs*, &c.

Now as theſe two properties are two reſiſtances, not in two different things, but

are one and the ſame thing in this contrariety in and to itſelf; as they are inſeparable, generate each other, are equal in ſtrength, and can neither of them overcome the other, ſo as to go one way, but each of them ſtops the other in the ſame manner; and ſeeing this Deſire cannot ceaſe to be theſe Two contrary things; *viz.* a *holding-faſt* and *moving-away*, a *ſhutting in* and a *going-out*, both in the ſame degree of ſtrength; neither able to ſhut up, nor to go out, nor able to ceaſe from either; theſe two contrarieties become a *whirling anguiſh* in itſelf, and ſo bring forth a *Third Property* of *Nature*. And in theſe three properties lies the true ground of all ſenſibility of life, and alſo of every created thing. Matter, motion, darkneſs, fire, and every natural power or quality of any thing, has its beginning from them. Conſidered in themſelves, they are the working powers of that great and ſtrong creaturely life, which cannot be broken, becauſe it begets itſelf, and every property is included in, and generates each other. It is a band or knot of life, that can never be looſed; nor is capable of annihilation, becauſe it is a birth of eternal Nature, which is as unchangeable as God himſelf. And as it ariſes from no outward thing, but is generated in and from itſelf,

its

its work is eternal, and can never be made to ceaſe. For as one property has no power over the other, but that of *forcing* it to exiſt; as one property does not weary the other, but always gives ſtrength to it; ſo there can be no ceſſation of their working, but they muſt do, as they do, to all eternity.

Now the life of theſe Three Properties, is a life of Three contrary wills, equally ſtrong and powerful againſt each other; and therefore is a life of the higheſt diſquiet, torment, and anguiſh, full of the moſt horrible ſenſibility. It is a life that can feel nothing but its own tearing contrariety that reigns within it. And this is the life of Nature ſeparated from God; it is the life of hell, and the devils; and is that life of dark, raging diſtraction, which every living creature muſt be in, whoſe firſt properties of life are not ſoftened and quieted, either by the Light of God, or the Light of this world, dwelling and making peace in them. And he that will only ſeek to his reaſon, to cool the flame of theſe raging firſt properties of life, acts as wiſely as he, whoſe houſe being on fire, would only have it extinguiſhed, by reading a lecture upon the nature of water to it.

And now, Sir, you have ſeen plainly enough the birth, nature, and difference of

theſe three firſt properties. But let it be ſuppoſed, that you have no feeling, or inward ſenſibility, of theſe Three Properties, in the manner they have been here deſcribed, according to *Jacob Behmen*; yet you have no Reaſon to be troubled at it, or put your brain upon the rack how to conceive it, or fear that you muſt want the benefit of this knowledge, till you have it as above deſcribed; for you have in yourſelf a moſt ſelf-evident proof, that the thing is really ſo; and that Deſire hath *all that* in it which he ſo deeply declares, from its firſt ſeed, or root.

For it is a thing ſelf-evident to you, that every deſire, as ſuch, is in itſelf a reſtleſs torment; that it has pain, diſquiet, and anguiſh, in itſelf; and, as to itſelf, conſiſts of nothing elſe. Now, whether you can, with *Jacob Behmen*, divide this reſtleſs, anguſhing deſire into its Three eſſential parts, of which it conſiſts, matters not, as to the reality of the thing itſelf; for you have ſenſibility enough, that the deſire is made up of pain and anguiſh, till the thing deſired is obtained: and therefore you have all the certainty and benefit of this knowledge, and it ſerves the ſame end, as if you knew the ground of it, with the ſame exactneſs as he has ſet it forth.

You

You have yourſelf for a proof, that deſire and pain begin together; and this is a full proof of what was ſaid, *viz.* that Deſire begins with *Two Properties* that reſiſt and ſtrive againſt one another. Again, you have the ſame evidence in yourſelf, that the Deſire, left to itſelf, that is, without the leaſt glimpſe of any poſſibility of having that which it deſires, is a degree of hell, and quite intolerable to itſelf: and this is a ſelf-evident proof of what was ſaid, *viz.* that the third and laſt property of the Deſire, is that whirling anguiſh, brought forth by the two firſt properties: for theſe three properties are the whole of the Deſire; it has nothing more in it. And when your Deſire cannot ceaſe, and yet has nothing but itſelf, without the leaſt mixture or feeling of hope in it; then you have a full ſelf-evidence of *all that* which the Deſire is, in its three eſſential, inſeparable properties, and that ſtrictly according to the letter of *Jacob Behmen*.

Now all that is Nature, or natural Life within you, is only the working of Deſire in this painful ſtate; and *that* which can ſet this painful life at reſt in you, is ſo much of God, or the Divine Nature, manifeſted in you, and changing your reſtleſs properties of life into peace and happineſs. And as the working

working properties of Desire are your natural life, so the same working properties are the life of eternal Nature; from whence, as out of the womb, your natural life is brought forth, and hath neither more nor less in it than that which is in eternal nature.

And if the working properties, which constitute the life of eternal Nature, could be supposed to be without God in them, eternal Nature would be a mere eternal Hell: but as the eternal Desire, with all its working properties, is brought forth by the magic power of the Divine Will, only for this end, that the holy Deity may manifest a Heaven of Glory in them; so eternal Nature always was, and always must be, a kingdom of Heaven, or the unchangeable manifestation of the invisible God in an outward sensibility of life, happiness, glory, and majesty.

Academicus. I am fully satisfied as to this point; and all that you have said, has the evidence of light at noon-day. And I hope you will now go on in the birth of the four remaining properties; and show me, in the same degree of evidence, how these three properties bring forth the four following ones, which turn Nature into a kingdom of Heaven.

Theophilus.

THEOPHILUS. Theſe three properties of Nature, cannot bring forth the four following ones. They can bring forth nothing but themſelves to all eternity; nor can ever be any thing elſe in themſelves, but what they were at firſt. Nature can riſe no higher than this painful ſtate; and its painful working contrariety muſt always be the ground of all life, and all ſenſibility of life. For if (1.) This ſhutting-up, or compreſſing; and (2.) This reſiſtance to it; and (3.) This whirling ariſing from both, was ever to ceaſe, there life, and all ſenſibility, muſt ceaſe with them; and therefore theſe three properties muſt always do as they do, as the only poſſible ground of every kind and degree of every creaturely life, both in heaven, and on earth.

But if life is to be happy, ſomething elſe muſt come into them, not to deſtroy their natural working, but to make every contrariety in them a ſtrife of joy and delightful ſenſibilities. Thus, (1.) Compreſſing, or ſhutting-up, muſt find itſelf only to compreſs and keep in light and love; (2.) The attraction or drawing-motion, muſt find itſelf to be the drawing and motion of love; and, (3.) The whirling anguiſh muſt whirl ſtill, but as a *tranſport of joy*, unavoidably brought forth from the ſtrife of love in

in the two properties of which it is born. And thus Nature remains in its full ſtrength; it compreſſes, it attracts, and it whirls, as it did at firſt; and nothing is loſt, or taken from it, but its hatred, wrath, and miſery. Now here you are to obſerve, that every thing or creature, either in heaven, hell, or this world, hath its ſubſtance, or all that is ſubſtantially in it, ſolely from theſe three firſt properties of Nature. The creaturely ſubſtance of an angel, a devil, or a dead flint, all ſtand in theſe three firſt forms of Nature. And all the difference betwixt high and low, ſpiritual and material, in the creatures, ariſes from their different participation of the four following forms of Nature. But the four following forms cannot exiſt, or manifeſt themſelves, but in the three firſt; and therefore the three firſt are, and muſt be, as well in the higheſt as in the loweſt of creatures: they are the firſt *ſomething*, or *ſubſtantiality* of Nature, in which the Light, and Love, and Spirit of God could manifeſt itſelf; for Spirit cannot work without ſomething to work in and upon, and in which it may be found; nor could *Light* ſhine, unleſs there was *ſomething* in Nature *thicker* than itſelf, to receive and reflect it: and therefore, *thickneſs* or darkneſs is, and muſt be, as eternal

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as the *visible* or *shining* light. Darkness is so far from being a mere *negation*, or only an *absence* of the light, that it is the *first* and *only* substance, and the ground of all the possible substantiality in Nature, and the substantial manifestor of light itself, which could have no *visibility*, *shine*, or *colour*, but in, and through, and by the substantiality of darkness or thickness. This darkness, thickness, or substantiality, is not co-existent with, or independent of God, but is the *compressing*, *astringing*, *thickening* work of the first property of the Desire; which Desire comes eternally from God, only as a magic birth from the will of the Deity, which willeth to come out of its hiddenness, into an outward visibility of a working life. And therefore the Desire is the beginning of Nature; it compresses and thickens. But what does it compress and thicken? Why, nothing but itself; *viz.* its own three properties. And these three properties thus brought forth, tied and bound in one another, are, from eternity to eternity, all the substantiality and thickness, that is or ever can be in Nature, or any creature, from the highest to the lowest. And they are thus brought forth, in this indissolvable band in and by the Desire, that the invisible light and life of the hidden Deity

Deity may have its *ſomething* to move and ſhine in; his hidden Spirit have *ſomething* to work and manifeſt itſelf in; his hidden Love have *ſomething* into which it may give itſelf; and his hidden Life have ſomething in which it can open itſelf in a variety of births of life. And *this ſomething* is the *working compreſſing Deſire*, which includes in itſelf, (1.) A continual thickening, which is darkneſs and ſubſtantiality; (2.) Motion or reſiſtance to this thickening, which is the ground of all ſenſibility; and, (3.) A reſtleſs ſtate of whirling from theſe two properties, which is the very nature and power of life. And thus theſe three properties of the Deſire, are that *ſufficient ſomething*, in which the Deity, by entering into it, can manifeſt his hidden power in all the ſubſtances and working properties of Nature, by turning them all, in their different workings, into an endleſs variety of delightful forms and ſenſibilities of the creaturely life.

Now this firſt thickneſs, darkneſs, or ſubſtantiality, brought forth in the Deſire, though it is not matter, as matter is ſeen and found in this world; yet theſe two things muſt be affirmed of it: *Firſt*, That it ſtands in the ſame place, anſwers the ſame ends, and is diſtinguiſhed from Light and Spirit in the

the eternal world, juſt as matter in this world ſtands diſtinguiſhed from the light and ſpirit of this world. *Secondly*, That all the darkneſs, thickneſs, and matter of every kind in this world, is nothing elſe in itſelf, but the firſt thickneſs, darkneſs, and ſubſtantiality in the Deſire, brought down by various ſteps into ſuch kinds of materiality as are here to be ſeen. Look at what kind of materiality you will in this world; it is, in its whole nature, nothing elſe but the darkneſs or thickneſs of the eternal world, brought into a further degree of thickneſs and compreſſion. And now we are come to ſee the true ground, (1.) How the angels could deſtroy their kingdom, or loſe all the light and happineſs of Heaven in it; and, (2.) How alſo, their waſted, ſpoiled, darkened habitation in the divided properties of Nature, could be turned, and created by God, as it is, into this new form of a material world.

The firſt three properties of Nature were never to have been ſeen or known, as they are in themſelves, by any creature; their thickneſs, ſtrife, and darkneſs, were brought forth by God, in union with the light, and glory, and majeſty of Heaven; and only for this end, that the holy Deity might be made manifeſt in them. And therefore their

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own Nature, as they are in themſelves, without God in them, could only then be firſt known, when the Angels turned their Deſire backwards, to ſearch and find the ground and original of life; which could not be found, till theſe properties were found, in which the original ground of life lay hid. This turning of their Deſire into the origin of life, was their whole turning from the Light of God; and therefore they found themſelves where they had turned their Deſire; that is, in the centre of Nature; *viz.* in the firſt propeties of Nature, the *dark centre* or ground of life, which never ſhould have been known or manifeſt to any creature. For, by the centre of Nature, or the *dark centre*, you are always to underſtand theſe three firſt properties; which, when without or ſeparate from the Light and Goodneſs of the Deity in them, are in themſelves only the thickneſs, and rage, and darkneſs, of an omnipotent *compreſſing*, an omnipotent *reſiſtance* to it, and an omnipotent *whirling* from theſe two omnipotent contrarieties. I call them all omnipotent, becauſe they cannot be ſtopped, but do all that they would; and though they are contrary to one another, yet each of them gives ſtrength to the other; ſo that the omnipotence of the one, is the omnipotence of the other. And this

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is the boundleſs, inceſſant, ſtrong rage, darkneſs, and ſtrife, of the helliſh life; which only is that, which theſe three properties of Nature, when left to themſelves, can feel or find. Now the Angels, which turned their Deſire into this centre of Nature, fell into the life and working power of theſe three properties; they felt nothing elſe in themſelves, but theſe properties; they had no other will or power of working, but as theſe properties worked; and therefore, as living and active creatures, they could only live, and act, and co-operate, or unite with that ground of Nature without them, which was the *ſame* and *one* with their own Nature; and therefore, all that they could do, was to ſtir up, awaken, call forth, and act with that thickneſs and darkneſs, and ſtrife, that was hidden in Nature, juſt as the toad, in a fine garden, only ſucks the poiſon that is hid in a good herb. So the fallen Angels, though in Heaven, having only the centre of Nature in themſelves, could only find and work with that centre and root of darkneſs, on which the heavenly glory ſtood. But from this power which they had of working in the centre of Nature, came forth a *dark wrathful ſubſtantiality*, ſeparated from the light and glory of the holy Deity; and thus a *new kind* of ſubſtantiality appeared in their

kingdom; and their outward habitation was like their inward life, *viz.* a *manifeſtation of Nature fallen from God.* And here now, you clearly ſee, how the firſt thickneſs or compreſſion of the firſt property of Nature, which was only the *hidden ſubſtantiality* of the light and glory of Heaven, came into a *more outward* ſtate, and made its firſt approach or ſtep towards *matter*, as you now ſee it. For there was now a *thickneſs*, a *darkneſs*, and *hardneſs*, which never had been before; for the light being loſt, then the firſt property of Nature loſt its beatified ſtate of meekneſs, tranſparency, and ſpiritual fluidity, and became ſtiff, rigid, dark, and hard; and this, as I ſaid, was its *firſt* ſtep or deſcent towards the hardneſs and darkneſs of the matter of this world, till it came to be earth and ſtones, by the creating power of God. And thus it came to paſs, as *Moſes* ſpeaks, *that darkneſs was upon the face of the deep.* A ſtate, that had no poſſibility of exiſtence, till the ſin of Angels had manifeſted the hidden centre of Nature, in the working of its three properties, without the Light of God in them.

Now as a new thickneſs of darkneſs, hardneſs, or ſubſtantiality, was manifeſted by the ſtrong working powers of the Angels in the centre, or the firſt properties of fallen Nature;

Naure; ſo God, to manifeſt his Wiſdom and Goodneſs towards this fallen Nature, took all theſe properties in their own working way; and made them, in their own way of working, to ſtop and overcome the evil that was brought forth by them. For the will of God joining with the wrathful *aſtringency* of the firſt compreſſing property of Nature, became the *Divine Fiat*, which increaſed this compacting property to ſuch a degree, as created or compacted the darkened ſubſtantiality into a globe of earth and ſtones. And this ſame Divine *Fiat*, or creating power, which coagulated the groſsneſs into earth and ſtones, compreſſed or coagulated all that was ſubſtantial, or belonged to ſubſtantiality, through their whole kingdom, as well the heavenly as the earthly part of it; ſo that all their kingdom, as to its ſubſtantiality, loſt its ſpirituality, and entered into a new created or compacted ſtate of thickneſs, as well the ſpoiled, as the unſpoiled part of their kingdom. And as ſoon as this was done, the Angels loſt all their power in it, and over it. They could kindle no more wrath in its heavenly part, nor make any uſe of that which they had ſpoiled, becauſe all was ſhut up together in this new compaction, with which the ſpirituality of their nature could have no communication. And ſo they were left priſoners in their own

chains of darkneſs, unable to ſtir up wrath any where but in themſelves. All this was done in the firſt day of the creation, when the *Fiat* of God compreſſed or created their whole kingdom into a Heaven and earth. Hence it is, *viz.* from a compaction of their whole kingdom into a new-created Heaven and earth; that all things in this world, all its elements and ſtars, are a mixture of good and evil, have ſomething of the goodneſs of Heaven, and ſomething of the wrath and evil of Hell, in them. Hence is the great variety of metallic ores and precious ſtones in the earth; the good and bad qualities in fire, air, and water. It is becauſe the Divine *Fiat*, or compacting power, came at once in the utmoſt ſwiftneſs upon their whole kingdom, as the good and evil ſtood in ſtrife againſt each other, and compreſſed all into a ſtate of ceſſation and conjunction with one another, as in the priſon of this new-created materiality. And thus the heavenly and helliſh part of their kingdom, light and darkneſs, fluidity and hardneſs, meekneſs and wrath, good and evil, were all ſhut up together in the ſame ſudden compaction; in which they lay, as in a ſtate of death, till the Divine *Fiat* ſhould awaken a life in it.

Now the three firſt properties of nature, the firſt, a *ſhutting* up; the ſecond, a *running*

ning out; and the third, a *whirling*; were by the Divine *Fiat*, in the three firſt days of the creation, become the ground of an earthly, a watery, and airy materiality, all according to the working nature of the three properties; and all of them having ſomething of an heavenly Nature ſhut up in them, which wanted to be delivered from its bondage. Hence this threefold materiality of earth, water, and air, became a ſubject fit for the birth of the fourth property of Nature. And therefore, on the fourth day of the creation, the Divine *Fiat* kindled in this *anguiſhing* materiality, out of that very *fire* and *light* that was compacted and hid in it, the fourth property of Nature (the eternal fire) as a globe of fire and light, which was to ſtand as an out-birth of the eternal fire, in the midſt of this new-created materiality, and become the opener of all the aſtral life and light in this world. And as the eternal fire, the fourth property of eternal Nature, is not a moveable thing that can change its place, but muſt be always in the place of its birth, ſtanding for ever, as a birth, in the midſt of the ſeven properties, for ever changing the three firſt properties of Nature into the three laſt properties of the kingdom of Heaven; ſo the ſun, the true out-birth of

the eternal fire, and having the same birth and office in this material world, as the eternal fire hath in eternal Nature, is not, cannot be, a *moveable* thing, or be in any *other place* in this world, than where it is; but is, and must be, the *centre* or heart of this whole system, ever separating the three first properties of this material world, from the three that follow, and ever changing the three first forms of material wrath, into the three following forms of terrestrial life, light, and all delightful sensibilities; in strict conformity to that, which the eternal fire does in eternal Nature, changing the root, or first properties of Nature, into a kingdom of God, and heavenly glory. For the *sun* is not a body of fire brought into the place where it is; but the *kindled place* is its body and birth; and therefore it is as immoveable as place is, and must be as it is; *viz.* a place giving forth fire and light till all material Nature is dissolved. The place is kindled, not by any foreign fire, but thus: in the first compaction of the whole angelic kingdom into this new materiality, the good and bad part, that is, the spoiled and unspoiled substantiality of their whole kingdom, was shut up in this new compression or materiality, in one and the same state of death. *Secondly*, In the beginning of the creation, God

God ſaid, *Let there be light, and there was light*; not a *ſhining* light, for that came firſt from the birth of the ſun; but a power or virtue of heavenly light, not yet in a *viſible, material ſhine*, but as an *uncreated* power of light, entering into this whole materiality, to ſtir up, and awaken the good part of the heavenly ſubſtantiality, that was ſhut up in the compaction of this new materiality.

Without theſe two things, material Nature muſt have continued in its darkneſs, and no fourth form of fire could ever have come forth in it. But from theſe two things, *viz.* the heavenly ſubſtantiality, ſtirred up by the power of light entering into it, the three firſt properties of darkneſs were brought into a mere anguiſhing ſtate; from whence, by the Divine *Fiat*, the fourth form of material Nature kindled itſelf, as a fire, and *broke forth* in the place of the ſun, and muſt be ever burning and flaming in the midſt of the material ſyſtem; becauſe it is born of the three firſt properties of darkneſs, and brings forth the three laſt properties of light, and life, and the joy of Nature; and therefore muſt always be in the midſt of the ſix properties of Nature, itſelf making the number to be ſeven. And thus the ſun, as the fourth form of Nature, muſt always ſtand in the midſt of the whole material ſyſtem: and

this proved, not as *Copernicus* has proved it, from reaſonable conjectures, and outward arguments, but from the internal Nature of its birth, the firſt root from which it proceeds, and the abſolute impoſſibility of its being otherwiſe. And thus it is, that the truth and depth of Nature is opened by the Spirit of God, in the myſtery made known to our illiterate ſhoemaker. And thus you have a ſhort ſketch, how this world came to be as it is. It is deſcended as an outbirth of the eternal world, and all the ſeven properties of eternal Nature work in it, as they work in eternity; and the eternity is manifeſted in the temporary working of a new world, which is only to ſtand in this ſtate of thickneſs or compaction for a time, till the goodneſs of God towards fallen Nature has been ſufficiently manifeſted thereby.

For as this material ſyſtem of things may, in a good ſenſe, be ſaid to be an unnatural ſtate, occaſioned by the diſorders which the fall of angels brought into Nature; and as it had no beginning, but from the will of God, commanding the firſt property of Nature to coagulate and compreſs their diſordered kingdom into a new thickneſs or materiality, only as a remedy, to ſtop, remove, and overcome the evil in Nature; ſo when this remedy ſhall have had its trial, and the

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will of God ſhall no longer will this compreſſing together; then all that has been brought together by it, muſt fall back again into its firſt eternity. And then, without any poſſibility of being otherwiſe, every birth in this world, that belongs to the root or centre of Nature, and has worked with it, muſt fall down into that eternal abyſs of darkneſs, on which the light of God for ever ſtands, unknown to it. And every life that is born of Heaven, and has worked with it, muſt aſcend into the kingdom of God, or abyſs of divine glory and majeſty.

O ACADEMICUS! Look now (whilſt theſe thoughts are alive in you) at worldly greatneſs, fleſhly wiſdom, and earthly ſchemes of happineſs; and tell me, if you can, what a nothingneſs, what a folly and deluſion, there is in them? Look again at the Apoſtle's Pilgrim, abſtaining from worldly luſts; deſiring to know nothing but Chriſt, and him crucified; living in the Spirit of Prayer, and thirſt after God; ſtriving in every thing after the fulleſt conformity to the tempers, ſpirit, life, and behaviour of Chriſt in this world; and then tell me, whether Heaven and Earth, God and Nature, and all that is great, and wiſe, and happy, does not call upon you to be this Pilgrim.

ACADEMICUS.

ACADEMICUS. Truly, Sir, I enough ſee, that all worldly wiſdom, and ambitious views of a glory of life in the things and concerns of this world, are no better than vain attempts to be bleſſed and happy from the ruins of the angelic kingdom. For this world is only a thickneſs and materiality of the beſtial life, built upon the ground of Hell; that is, upon the firſt properties of fallen Nature, brought into a harder, more compacted ſtate of exiſtence than they have in Hell, and kindled into an aſtral, terreſtrial, beſtial life, by the power of the ſun. The beſtial life, therefore, is the higheſt good and happineſs in it; and the creatures of this world have nothing that they ſeek for further in it. But man being not created for it, but by ſin fallen into it, is the only creature that makes an unnatural uſe of it; and ſeeks for that in it, and by it, which cannot be found in it. Man, having been wiſe, great, and happy in his creation, though they are all loſt, has yet ſome remaining ſenſibility of them, though fallen into a world, that cannot help him to them. Hence it is, that he would be wiſe, and great, and happy in a world, that has no happineſs but for beaſts; and can only help man to know, that he is poor and miſerable, and baniſhed from his true native country.

But,

But, instead of learning this one lesson of Truth, from the world he is in, which is all the wisdom, greatness, and happiness, that can be had from it; he gives himself up to a wisdom that is foolishness, a greatness that is all meanness, and a happiness that begins and ends in torment and delusion. Would you see all his greatness, wisdom, and happiness united, the sum total of earthly glory? It is, when he has in his cap the feathers of some birds, wears a painted ribband and laced cloaths, is called by some new name, and drawn from place to place by a number of beasts. Now, poor, and mean, and unnatural, as this fiction of earthly glory is, yet this is the powerful idol, that carries all before it! that destroys all sense of goodness, and Divine Virtue! and keeps the heart of man so earnestly devoted to it, that he has no sense of the eternity that is in him; that eternity brought him forth, and eternity will take him again!

THEOPHILUS. It is true, ACADEMICUS, that the highest good of this world is its bestial life; and therefore it has no more, or other happiness for a man, than for a beast; can give no more to one, than to the other, *viz.* food and raiment; with which the bestial life in man ought to be content,

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as well as in the beaſt. But ſeeing man, in ſpite of the nature of things, will have an earthly glory of life; thence it is, that the wiſdom of this world is, and muſt be, fooliſhneſs with God; and will be fooliſhneſs with man, as ſoon as he gets but a moderate knowledge of himſelf. But give me leave juſt to obſerve, that though this material world has no higher happineſs than the beſtial life, yet God had much higher ends in creating it. For though the dark wrathful properties of fallen Nature could only, in their compaction, be made the ground of a vegetable and beſtial life; yet you are to obſerve, that in the creation of this word, *viz. in the compaction of the whole angelic kingdom*, the unſpoiled heavenly part thereof was ſhut up with that, in which the wrath was kindled: and that for theſe two great ends; *Firſt*, That, by this compaction, it might be taken out of the power of the evil angels, that they might not go on in kindling wrath in it. *Secondly*, That this reſerved good part of their kingdom, might be the foundation and ground of an heavenly paradiſiacal life, and a new hoſt of heavenly creatures, inſtead of the fallen angels. Now, to do this, God created an human angel, who was to call for the paradiſiacal life out of the compacted heavenly ſubſtantiality;

ſubſtantiality; as the ſun opened a vegetable beſtial life, out of the groſs ſubſtantiality of the material world.

God breathed the Triune Spirit of the holy Deity into a body taken out of the earth, that is, into a body of that *heavenly ſubſtantiality*, that was ſhut up in the earth, as well as in every other part of this material ſyſtem; and therefore his body is rightly ſaid to be taken or formed out of the earth, becauſe it was formed of that ſubſtantiality which was ſhut up in the earth.

But when his wandering eye had raiſed a longing deſire to know what the earthly life was in its good and evil, and took the certain means of knowing it; then, as his ſoul loſt the Light and Spirit of God, ſo it loſt alſo that heavenly luminous body, in which the Light and Spirit of God could dwell, as it dwelleth in Heaven. And when this heavenly luminous corporeity was loſt, and ſhut up again in that earthly bondage and compaction in which it lay, before it was his body; then the poor fallen ſoul was only cloathed with the groſs corruptibility of beſtial fleſh and blood. You are to underſtand this matter thus: when his body was formed out of that heavenly ſubſtantiality, that was in the compaction of the earth, it was not intirely ſeparated from all earthly materiality

(becauſe

(becauſe he was to have a body of this world, as well as of the heavenly world) but its *ſtate* in the earthly materiality was *intirely changed*; it was till then ſhut up in the earthly compaction, but now it is called out of that *earthly death* into a ſtate of life; it is ſet free from the power of the earth, in a ſuperiority over it, to be its happineſs, and open its own glory in it, and through it.

And thus you ſee the *poſſibility*, the *truth*, and the *manner* of the thing; how his heavenly body was taken out of the earth at his creation, ſet in freedom from it, and in a living ſuperiority over it; how, at the fall, it was ſwallowed up, or compacted again in *its own firſt earth*; *viz.* the earthly body, or materiality of *Adam:* for as it was not ſeparated from this earthly materiality, but only brought to life in it, and ſuperiority over it; ſo when the divine Light, which was the life of this body, was loſt, it then fell again into a ſtate of death in that groſs materiality, under which it lay before. And thus in the ſtricteſt truth, the body of *Adam* returned again to that very earth, or duſt, from whence it was taken.

Now, when this happened, the fallen Angels entered again into ſome power in their loſt kingdom. There was then ſomething

thing found, with which they could work, and join their own power. For as the ſoul of man had loſt the Light and Spirit of Heaven, ſo the ſame *dark centre* of Nature, or the three firſt wrathful properties, were opened in it, as are opened in the fallen Angels. And thus they got entrance into the awakened hell in man, and can work in it. For as often as man ſtirred, followed, or worked with his will according to theſe properties, the devil could enter into, and work with him; and ſo the firſt ſon of fallen man was made a murderer. And hence it is, that ſin and wickedneſs have known no bounds; it is becauſe it is the joint work of fallen angels, and fallen man.

Stay a while, Sir, in view of theſe Truths: here you ſee the ſeat and ground, the birth and growth, of all ſin and evil; it lies in theſe three dark, ſelfiſh, ſelf-willed, wrathful, helliſh properties of the fallen ſoul. This is the *dark centre* of Nature, in which the devils have all their own power in themſelves, and all their power in you;—— and till you reſiſt this hell within you, till you live in contrariety to it, the devils will not flee from you.

Here alſo you ſee, in a ſelf-evident light, the deep ground, and abſolute neceſſity, of that *one Redemption*, which is called, and is, *the*

the meekneſs and heavenly blood of the lamb of God. For theſe words in their true ground, mean only the changing of the three firſt dark wrathful properties of fallen Nature, into the three laſt properties of the heavenly Life, Light, and Love, which is the Life of God reſtored to the ſoul, or the Light, and Spirit, or Word of God, born again in it. Let me only add this one word: turn from wrath of every kind, as you would flee from the moſt horrid devil; for it is his, it is he, and his ſtrength in you. Whether you look at rage and anger in a tempeſt, a beaſt, or a man, it is but one and the ſame thing, from one and the ſame cauſe; and therefore your own wrath is to be turned from, as the ſame with that of hell; and which has its birth and ſtrength from that hell or centre of Nature, which the fall of angels hath made known; and which only worketh thus differently, whether it be in a man, a beaſt, or the elements of this world. And this muſt be, till the centre of Nature is again in its place of hiddenneſs, by being wholly overcome by Heaven. Embrace therefore every meekneſs of love and humility, with the ſame eagerneſs as you would fall down at the feet of *Jeſus Chriſt*; for it is his, it is he, and his power of ſalvation in you. Enter into no

ſtrife

ſtrife or ſelf-defence againſt any one, that either reproaches you, or your doctrine: but remember, that if you are to join with *Chriſt* in doing good, your ſword of natural wrath muſt be locked up in its own ſheath; no weapons of fleſh are to be uſed; but you muſt work only in the meekneſs, the ſweetneſs, the humility, the love and patience of the Lamb of God, who, as ſuch, is the only doer of good, the only overcomer of wrath, and the one Redemption of fallen Nature. If you are reproached as an *enthuſiaſt*, do not take comfort in thinking, that it is the truth of your own piety, or the want of it in others, that gives occaſion to the charge; for though both of theſe ſhould happen to be the caſe, yet they are not proper reflections for you; and if you take your peace from them, it is not the peace of God in you: but as in good report, you are to be as though you heard it not, aſcribing nothing to yourſelf from it; ſo in evil report, ſelf is juſt as much to be forgotten; and both of them are to be uſed, only as an occaſion to generate humility, meekneſs, love, and the Spirit of the Lamb of God, both in yourſelf, and all that ſpeak either well or ill of you. For this is the will and working of heaven; it has but one will, and one work; and that is, to

change all the wrath, evil, and disorder of Nature, into a kingdom of God. And therefore he that would be a servant of God, and work with heaven, must will all that he willeth, do all that he doth, and bear all that he beareth, in that one spirit, and one will, with which heaven ruleth over all the earth.

You rejoice to think, that you know the true ground of your Redemption; how heaven comes again into the fallen soul, when that property of light and love, which is called the *fifth property* of Nature, is generated in it. It is indeed a blessed knowledge; but its blessedness is only then yours, when yourself are this *fifth property*; that is, when your life is a life of this fifth property; when, whatever you do, where-ever you go, or whatever you meet, you only do as this fifth property doth, give nothing but that which it giveth, *viz.* its gentle light and love to every man, and every thing, whether it be good or bad. For this property hath nothing else to give, and yet is always giving; its nature is, to communicate and impart itself, not here or there, but always and every-where; it has no other will. When, therefore, this property (the *Christ* of God, the Life of Heaven) is born in you, friend and foe will have the same from

from you; you will have loſt all reſentment; you will love your enemies, bleſs them that curſe you, pray for them that deſpitefully uſe you; and have but one will towards every man, and that is, that light and love may do that for him, which they have done for you.

ACADEMICUS. O THEOPHILUS! you have given me more than I know how to contain; and yet have increaſed my thirſt after more ſtill. You have ſo touched the cord of love within me, that all my nature ſtands in a trembling deſire after it; I would fain feel nothing elſe but the gentle godlike power of love, living in my heart. Pray therefore, of all things, help me to underſtand how the fire, the fourth property of Nature, is born; and how it turns the three firſt wrathful forms into the three following forms of heavenly joy, triumph, and happineſs; the firſt of which three forms, is this *fifth* of light and love: therefore, help me here, I beſeech you.

THEOPHILUS. What a *therefore* have you here drawn? That therefore, of all things, I muſt needs help you to an *opinion*, or *notional* knowledge, *how* the fire is born, and *how* it turns Nature into a kingdom of God. For was I to join with you in forming notions of *this how*, I ſhould only help you to

loſe all, by being content with the ſhadow, inſtead of the ſubſtance.

You ſay, that your Nature ſtands in a *trembling deſire* after the birth of this light and love: if ſo, you ſtand in the very place of its birth, and muſt ſtand there till it is born in you. It can be born no-where elſe, nor in any other manner; and all that *Jacob Behmen* has written, is only to direct and bring you to this place of its birth. He himſelf has given you all the hearſay knowledge that you can have of it; for he can give you no more from the plaineſt words. And therefore, to help any one to work with his brain for clear notions, and rational conceptions, of what he has written, is helping him to do and be that, which all his works, from the beginning to the end, abſolutely declare againſt, as contrary to the whole nature and end of them. They ſpeak, as he ſaith, with the ſound of a trumpet; and chiefly to awaken man out of the dream and death of rational, notional, and hearſay knowledge; and to ſhow him, that his own inward hunger and thirſt after God, is that alone which can and muſt open the fountain of light and Divine Knowledge in him.

But to ſpeak a word or two of the *fire*, whoſe birth you want to know. You know already,

already, better than any words can tell you, from a ſelf-evident knowledge, that *Nature is in you*; that it is not God, *but is* that which *wants* God, or its true good; and muſt be an emptineſs, a pain, and want, till God is manifeſted in it. If you aſk, Why Nature is only a ſtate of want and diſquiet, and unable to be content with itſelf? It is becauſe the eternal, uncreated, incomprehenſible light, which no creature can enter into, is that which gave birth to all Nature, and from whence all Nature hath its hungering, and ſtate of want. For Nature had never come into being, but that the eternal incomprehenſible Light longed to be manifeſted in an *unſpoken* life of Nature and creatures, and in a *viſibility* and *ſplendour* of glory: therefore, as Nature came forth from this firſt longing of the light to be manifeſted in it, ſo nature is in itſelf only a want and hungering, which the light alone has raiſed, and can only ſatisfy.

Now from this longing on both ſides, Nature wanting God, and God deſiring to be manifeſted in Nature, the union of both is effected; which is the birth of that eternal fire, or fourth form of Nature, which is always burning in the ſame degree, that is, always doing the *ſame thing*, *viz.* always overcoming and ſhutting up the three

firſt forms of Nature, and making them to be the hidden root and centre of Nature; and always bringing forth out of them the three following properties of light and love, and every joyful ſenſibility of life; that is, changing Nature into a kingdom of heaven. Now *that* which makes this change in the properties of Nature, is, and is rightly called, Fire, in the ſtricteſt literal meaning of the word; becauſe all that we can conceive as fire in this world, hath its whole nature, power, and exiſtence, from it. Not only the fire of life in animals and vegetables, but the fire in the kitchen, and the candle, is each of them kindled as it is kindled, and doth all that it doth, from this fourth property, or fire of eternal Nature. The thickneſs and darkneſs in the wood, and the candle, have fire kindled in them, and light from that fire, in no other way, than as the fourth property is a fire from the thickneſs and darkneſs of Nature, kindled by the Light of God entering into union with it. Had the wood, and the candle, no *water* or *oil* in them, neither of them could give forth fire and light. Now water and oil have the properties of light in them: when therefore the properties of Nature in the wood, and the candle, are put into ſtriſe, and begin to work

work in blackneſs and darkneſs (which is the beginning of every fire), they by this ſtrife open an entrance for the properties of light in the water, and the oil, to mix and unite with them; and by this union of darkneſs and light, that fire is kindled, which turns the darkneſs of the wood and candle into a ſhining and light. And thus does every fire kindled in this world, bear an infallible witneſs to the *kindling*, the *nature*, and *power*, of that eternal fire, which, kindled by the oil of Divine Light, changes the firſt dark properties of Nature into the light and majeſty of heaven. Now what would you know more of fire, or its birth, than that it is, and only can be, kindled by the Light of God entering into, and uniting with, the firſt properties of Nature in the ſoul? Leave off, therefore, all working with your reaſon in the way of notions; empty your heart of all vain ſatisfactions in earthly things; that ſo the firſt properties of Nature in your ſoul, finding their miſery, and want of God, may make you to be all hunger, and faith, and deſire of him. And then the fire muſt kindle, nothing can hinder it; God will then infallibly come as a fire and light into your ſoul, changing all the wanting, empty, reſtleſs properties of your natu-

ral life, into the ſweetneſs of a New Birth of reſt and peace in him.

For nothing *works* either in God, or Nature, or creature, but *deſire*. And as God created angels and men out of eternal Nature, only through a longing deſire of manifeſting his own goodneſs and happineſs in them; ſo every angel and man muſt find God, as a life of happineſs and goodneſs in him, as ſoon as Nature, either in angel or man, is become a hunger after God. For hunger does all in all worlds, and finds all that it wants, and hungers after. Every thing had its beginning in it, and from it; and every thing is led by it to all its happineſs.

ACADEMICUS. I am quite ſatisfied in all my demands, and will aſk for no more help, as to the uſe I am to make of our Author's writings. Only tell me when they will all come forth in a new edition, or which will be publiſhed firſt; for I want ſeveral of them, which I could never get.

THEOPHILUS. If you have but two or three of his books, it is enough; for every one of them has all in it that you need be taught, and ſufficiently opens the ground of the whole myſtery of the Chriſtian Redemption. He himſelf thought his books to be too numerous; and expreſſed his wiſh, that

that they were all reduced into one. As he wrote without any art, and had no knowledge of regularity of compoſition; ſo whatever particular matter he occaſionally entered upon, he always began again afreſh from the ſame firſt ground, and full opening of the myſtery of Nature, from whence he explained and determined the matter he was upon. And it was this frequent, and almoſt conſtant repetition of one and the ſame ground, that ſwelled his writings into ſo many volumes; though it may be ſaid, that there is nothing ſeparately in any of his books, but what is to be found in almoſt every other, though not ſo largely ſet forth. You have no need, therefore, to run with eagerneſs through all his books; but the thing that you are to intend and look for, is the *ground* and foundation on which all his doctrines are built, which contains the true philoſophy, or *fundamental opening of all the powers that work both in nature and grace*; and that by this knowledge you may become a true workman yourſelf, and know how to conform to, and concur with, all that the working powers, either of nature or grace, require of you. Now this ground and foundation of all is (as far as words can do it) opened to you in every one of his books: and you have been already alſo ſufficiently

ficiently brought into the knowledge of it by what has been said of the *birth* of Nature; what it is, how it works, how it came into being, how it is distinct from God, how it wants God, how God is manifested in it, how every after-thing is from and out of it, is all that it is, and hath all that it hath, in it, and by it, and must have all its happiness or misery, according as it works with, or contrary to Nature. From this fundamental ground or opening of the working powers of Nature, you have seen how angels could, and did, lose their first state in Nature; and how a second new creation could, and did, come out of their fallen state and kingdom, all according to the powers of fallen Nature, over-ruled, and governed, and put into a new way by the good *creating Fiat* of God. You have seen how this new creation, with man its lord, could, and did, lose also their first created state in Nature; and how God, over-ruling fallen Nature again, did, by his merciful *redeming Fiat*, or by the holy *Jesus*, put this fallen new creation into a state of recovery, and all done according to the powers, and workings, and possibilities of Nature. So that nothing is done arbitrarily, or by mere will, but every thing in conformity to the unchangeable workings and powers of Nature; only directed,

rected, assisted, and helped, by the mercy of his *redeeming Fiat*, so far as Nature was capable of being helped. This, Sir, is the true and fundamental ground of all his doctrines: and, standing upon this ground, you stand in the centre of Truth, whence every thing that you need to know of God, of Nature, of Heaven, of Hell, of the Fall of Man, of his Redemption only and solely in and by the Word or Son of God, is known in such self-evident certainty, as you find and know the workings of your own life; and also, that happiness or misery, life or death, can only be had, or not had, lost or found, solely as a *birth in Nature*, brought forth by the faith, or magic power of the will of man, working either with, or contrary to, the *redeeming Fiat* of God.

To make, therefore, a right use of his writings, you should, for a sufficient time, keep solely to that part of them, which opens the ground and foundation of the powers that work in grace and nature, till by a self-evident sensibility it is opened in you, and your heart stands in a conformity to it, and true working with it: for it is your own heart, as finding the working power of nature and grace in itself, and simply given up in faith to work with them, that is to be your key and guide to that knowledge

knowledge you are to have of them; whether it be from the Holy Scripture, or the writings of this author. For to this end, he tells you, he has written all; *viz.* to help man to *ſeek and find himſelf*; what is his birth, his ſtate and place in Nature; what he is in body, ſoul, and ſpirit; from what worlds all theſe three parts of him are come; how they came to be as they are at preſent; what his fall is, and how he muſt riſe out of it. And therefore, if, in order to ſeek and find this ground in yourſelf, you was, for ſome ſufficient time, to read only to the 10th or 12th chapter of his *Three Principles*, or to the 6th or 8th chapter of his *Threefold Life*; and proceed no further, till this ground hath made itſelf manifeſt in you, and your heart ſtood in a ſtrict conformity to it, and working with it; you would then be in a true fitneſs to read further, and reap the full benefit from any other of his books, that ſhould fall into your hands, whether it was the *Way to Chriſt*, or the book upon the *Incarnation*. But, above all things, remember this advice, as of the laſt moment to you, *Be no reaſoner upon the myſtery*; ſeek for no commentaries, or rational explications of it, to entertain your reaſon with: for, as ſoon as you do this; then, however true and good

this

this myſtery may be in itſelf, it is, with regard to you, of no better uſe than that very vain *philoſophy and ſcience falſly ſo called*, condemned by the apoſtle. It will only be the ſame ſnare and deluſion to you, that other learning and philoſophy is to other people. For if there is nothing good or divine in you but the faith, and hope, and love, and deſire of your heart turned to God; if nothing can do any good, be any bleſſing or happineſs to this faith, and love, and deſire turned to God, but only God himſelf in his *holy being*; and if nothing can communicate God to you, but God himſelf; and if God cannot communicate himſelf to you under a *notion*, or an *idea* of reaſon, but as a degree of *life*, *good*, and *bleſſing*, born or brought to life in your ſoul; then you ſee, that to give yourſelf up to reaſoning, and notional conceptions, is to turn from God, and wander out of the way of all divine communication.

ACADEMICUS. But if it be ſtrictly thus, THEOPHILUS, had it not been better, that theſe deep matters had not been communicated to the world, ſince it is ſo natural to man to make a wrong uſe of them?

THEOPHILUS. This objection, ACADEMICUS, comes with the ſame ſtrength againſt the Scriptures themſelves. For, excepting the

the *ſeven thouſand* unknown in every age, as in the days of *Elijah*, and a few ſpiritual fathers and writers in almoſt every age of the church, bearing faithful witneſs to the truth and myſteries of religion, it muſt be ſaid, that human learning, governed by human reaſon, hath, from age to age, to this very day, not only miſtaken the true end and uſe of the Scriptures, but hath turned them into an occaſion of much evil and miſchief. The Scriptures ſpeak only to the heart and conſcience of man, not to amend or enlighten it with notions and opinions formed from the written letter of the word; but ſolely to make the *being* and *power* of God known and adored, to awaken in man a ſenſibility of his want of God, and to turn all the power, and ſtrength, and will of the heart wholly to God, to receive light, and life, and reſt, in his *holy being*.

But to ſpeak now directly to your objection: if I knew of any perſon, who ſtood in the faith and ſimplicity of the firſt Chriſtians, free from all carnal adherence to, or vain truſt in party-notions, doctrines, and errors, brought forth by the contention of ſects and churches; whoſe ſoul was dead to the earthly Nature, and all the rudiments of this world, ſeeking only light, life, and ſalvation,

vation, from God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, living and dwelling in him, redeeming and ſanctifying his whole body, ſoul, and ſpirit; to ſuch a one I could freely ſay, this myſtery was needleſs; as having all that already, which this myſtery would do for him. For its only end is, to bring man out of all the labyrinths of falſe and notional religion, to this very firſt ſtate and ſimplicity of the Goſpel-Faith and Life.

And this may paſs for a good reaſon, why this myſtery was not opened by God in the firſt ages of the church; ſince there was then no occaſion for it. For Religion began, and went on, rightly, in its own true way; it had the faith and heart of man; it ſtood in its own proper ſtrength and glory; and was an awakened Divine Life of faith, ſimply given up with joy and gladneſs to the myſteries of the Goſpel; not wanting any *why's* or *wherefore's*, becauſe in the real poſſeſſion of all the *good*, and *bleſſing*, and *power*, of every myſtery of ſalvation.

But ſeeing a *worldly ſpirituality*, called in Scripture the whore riding upon the *beaſt*, has had its thouſand years in the church; ſince not only every kingdom, but almoſt every corner of Chriſtendom, has a *Babel* of its own, built upon ſome rational interpretation

pretation of the letter of Scripture; since learned reason, *within* the church, knows no other use of Scriptures, but to reproach and condemn all other *Babels*, and to find materials to strengthen its own; since reason, *without* the church, finds it as easy to reproach and condemn *all revelation*, as it is to reproach all these *Babels* built upon it; since this is the finished conclusion, brought forth by the *reason* and fleshly *wisdom* both of those that defend, and those that oppose the Gospel; how adorable is the goodness of God, in vouchsafing to these last ages of the world such a remedy (*viz.* the opening the ground and mystery of all things) as is suitable to the distressed and confused state of religion in the world! and how easy is it also to see the greatest reasons, why this remedy was not afforded sooner! For as true faith did not want it; and learned reason, whilst pleased with itself, could not be in a condition to receive it; so it was highly suitable to the goodness and wisdom of God, not to give forth this mystery, till reason, or fleshly wisdom, had made shipwreck of faith; and had so filled up the measure of its folly, as to stand in its last and highest state of distress, perplexity, and confusion. For any remedy is only then likely to be rightly received, when distress and perplexity

plexity make the want of it to be ſenſibly felt.

Let not, therefore, the genuine, plain, ſimple Chriſtian, who is happy and bleſſed in the ſimplicity of Goſpel-Faith, take offence at this myſtery, becauſe he has no need of it; for it is God's goodneſs to the diſtreſſed ſtate of the church, fallen from the life and power of Goſpel-Faith, and groaning under the ſlavery, darkneſs, and perplexity, of bewildered reaſon and opinions.

Neither let the orthodox divine, who ſticks cloſe to the phraſes and ſentiments of antiquity, reject this myſtery as heretical, becauſe it opens a ground of man, and the divine myſteries, not known or found in the primitive writers. For this is the very reaſon, why he ſhould thankfully receive it with open arms, as having, and being that very thing, which the diſtreſſed divided ſtate of the church now ſo greatly wants; and yet did not want, till it was fallen from its firſt ſimplicity of faith. For whilſt faith and life defended the myſteries of religion, the ground and philoſophy of it was not wanted: but when orthodoxy had given itſelf up to reaſon, and had nothing elſe for its ſupport but reaſon and argument from the letter of Scripture, without the leaſt knowledge of

the firſt ground of doctrines; then it could only be defended, as it is defended in every ſect and diviſion of the Chriſtian world. For if Reaſon will defend the myſteries of Redemption, without knowing the true ground on which they ſtand, or why they muſt be as they are, from the nature of the thing; the more zealous and learned any man is, the more errors muſt he fall into in the defence of them: for the greater the ſtrength is, that works without light, the more extravagancies it muſt produce. This is too viſible in all the controverſies that have riſen in the church. Now, that learned reaſon, as preſiding in the Divinity-ſchools, never yet had, nor could have, any knowledge of the ground of man, and the myſteries of Redemption, is plain from this one generally received opinion of every age to this day; *viz. That all things were created out of nothing.* For this maxim intirely excludes *all poſſibility* of giving any account of the ground and reaſon of any thing, either in the nature of man, or religion; and is the ſame thing as ſaying, that nothing has any ground or reaſon. For if that which begins to be, comes out of nothing, it can only have the nature of that out of which it comes; and therefore can have no more ſaid about it, why it is this or

that

that, than can be ſaid of that nothing, from whence it comes. And if the myſtery, or life of the human Nature, is out of nothing, has no reality of any antecedent ground in it, out of which it came to be ſuch as it is, and to have that which it hath; then it is moſt certain, that all the myſteries of the Religion of man muſt come forth from the *ſame nothing*, and have no antecedent ground from whence they come, that requires them to be as they are. For man, created out of nothing, cannot have a Religion that is of any higher deſcent than himſelf, unleſs he is to have a Religion that is quite unnatural to him. But a Religion that has its ground in eternity, muſt be an unnatural Religion to man that comes up in time, and out of nothing. If, therefore, you will hold man to be out of nothing, you muſt of all neceſſity hold all the myſteries of the Religion of Man to be alſo out of nothing; and that, therefore, no poſſible account can be given, either of the ground of man, or his Religion, or why there can be either right or wrong, good or evil, in either of them.

Hence you may ſee, why the Truth has always ſuffered in every controverſy of the church: thus, if you begin with that of St. *Auſtin* and *Pelagius*, about the freedom

of the human will; do but ſuppoſe, what is fact, that they both of them held the human will to be created out of nothing, and then you need not wonder at that number of volumes and ſyſtems of errors, which this diſpute has brought forth. For who can ſay, what the will is, or is not, what nature or power it muſt have, if it is created out of nothing? Whereas, if either of theſe diſputants had known, from a true ground, what the human will is; that it cannot be a made thing, much leſs made out of nothing; but that the will of angel or man, is the eternal uncreated will become creaturely, as a true direct birth from the Divine Will, deſcended from it, born out of it, and from thence come into a creaturely ſtate; then they had known, that the will of angel or man, muſt have the nature and freedom of the eternal will; and that its freedom not only conſiſted in its ſelf-motion, but chiefly and moſt glorioufly in this, that it could neither receive, nor have, nor be any thing, as to its happineſs or miſery, but according to its own working: and then all that predeſtinarian learning of decrees, *&c.* that has tormented the church ever ſince the time of St. *Auſtin*, had been prevented.

Look next at the *Socinian* controverſy. The *Socinians* and their opponents, met in the

the Field of Reaſon, to debate about the Fall, Original Sin, its Guilt, the vindictive Wrath of God, and the Neceſſity of ſatiſfying the Divine Juſtice; the Neceſſity of the Incarnation, Sufferings, Death, and Satisfaction, of Chriſt. Theſe were the great points to be tried at the bar of Reaſon. Now all theſe diſputants ſtood upon the old ground; *viz.* that the Soul of Man, as well as all other Things, was created out of Nothing. And therefore they all ſtood abſolutely excluded, from every poſſibility of touching the true ground or reaſon of any one doctrine in debate. For the ſoul, created out of nothing, leaves no room to affirm, or even to ſuppoſe, that any thing can be affirmed of the ground and reaſon of Chriſtian Redemption. For ſurely, if the ſoul of man is created out of Nothing, it may and muſt with as much ſenſe be affirmed, that it may be *redeemed by Nothing*; and he that affirms the one, can have no pretence to deny the other.

Juſt the ſame may be ſaid of the preſent controverſy, betwixt the Chriſtians and Infidels, concerning Chriſtianity itſelf. You need not wonder, that ſo many learned volumes have had ſo little effect; or that the defenders of Chriſtianity ſeem to loſe ground, though the Infidels, at the ſame time, get no

no advantage to their cauſe, but that of increaſing their numbers. For as neither ſide can go any higher, than a creation out of Nothing; ſo neither ſide can ſay any thing from a true ground, either for or againſt the myſteries of the Goſpel. If therefore infidelity increaſes, it is not becauſe it has got more light, ſees further into the depths of Nature, or ſtands upon a more rational ground; but merely becauſe the vanity and blindneſs of the diſpute, has a natural tendency to beget indifference and infidelity in the hearts of men.

Obſerve this propoſition, *viz.* *In God we live, and move, and have our being.* Now, how eaſy is it for any one to ſee, that no one can ſay any thing as to the ground and reaſons of the myſteries of the Goſpel, either for or againſt them, till he can go to the bottom of this propoſition, and plainly ſhow, either how we do, or do not, live and move, and have our being, in God! for the truth or falſeneſs of every myſtery of the Chriſtian Redemption, plainly depends upon this matter. If the Chriſtian, therefore, will ſpeak to the purpoſe, in defence of the ground of the Goſpel; he muſt be able to ſhow, that we are ſo in God, ſo have our life in him and from him, and ſo move in him, as to prove, from thence, the ground,

ground, the neceſſity, and certainty, of the Chriſtian means of Redemption. On the other hand, the Deiſt cannot take one rational ſtep, or have any true ground to ſtand upon, but ſo far as he can ſhow, that we are not ſo from God, have not ſuch a Nature in and from him, as to have any *want* of or any *fitneſs* for that method of Redemption, which the Goſpel teaches. But as neither ſide did this, though the one thing neceſſary to be done; ſo you alſo ſee, that neither ſide had any poſſibility of doing it. For the ſoul, created out of Nothing, allows of no inquiry, whether any thing of God be in it, or how it has its life in him, or ſtands related to him. It admits of no ſearching after any ground or reaſon of its good or evil, or how it muſt have its happineſs or miſery from the nature of the thing. For if the *intelligent life* itſelf muſt be ſuppoſed to come from no ground, but to be created out of Nothing; then it is certain, that its good and evil, its happineſs or miſery, with every thing elſe, muſt be ſuppoſed to have no ground or reaſon for being as it is, but to be created out of Nothing; and may go again into Nothing, juſt as the Creator pleaſeth.

And now, Sir, you may enough ſee how all controverſy, both within and without the

the church, has been ſo vain a thing. For Reaſon was to ſupport doctrines and myſteries, without the leaſt knowledge of the ground on which they ſtood; and Reaſon was to oppoſe them, in the ſame ignorance. You ſee alſo, why in theſe laſt ages, where literal learning has made ſo great a figure, that the matter has only been made worſe, and diviſion and error more triumphant. For as the ground of the truths was ſtill wanted, and nothing appealed to, but the letter and phraſe of Scripture; ſo the more artful and learned the diſputants were in reaſoning and criticiſm, the more abſurdities muſt be defended on both ſides. Why is not the learned Papiſt ſhocked at tranſubſtantion, or the Proteſtant at predeſtination and reprobation? It is becauſe each of them have enough of the *truth* of Reaſon, and the *goodneſs* of criticiſm, to draw the letter of Scripture to his ſide. And this you may be aſſured of, that reaſon, and literal learning, have juſt as good eyes in every other religious matter, and will give juſt ſuch an account of every other doctrine, when it comes into diſpute, as the Papiſt and Proteſtant have done in theſe two points. And the thing cannot be otherwiſe: as the Deiſt and Chriſtian both hold a creation out of Nothing, they muſt both have only an arbitrary

bitrary God, and an arbitrary Religion, that has no antecedent ground to ſtand upon, but is left to the arbitrary proof or reaſon of both of them. What thanks, therefore, are due to the goodneſs of God, for opening this great myſtery of all things in our author, wherein the right and wrong, the true and falſe, in Religion, is as manifeſt as any thing can be to our ſenſes! Let no one, therefore, take offence at the opening of this myſtery, as if it brought any thing new into Religion; for it has nothing new in it; it alters no point of Goſpel-doctrine, nor adds any thing to it, but only ſets every article of the old Chriſtian Faith upon its true ground, and in ſuch a degree of light, as, when ſeen, is irreſiſtible. It diſturbs no one, who is in poſſeſſion of the Truth; becauſe it points at nothing, drives to nothing, but to the opening the heavenly life in the ſoul. It calls no man from any outward form of Religion, as ſuch; but only ſhows, that no outward form can have any good in it, but ſo far as it only means, and ſeeks, and helps the renewed life of heaven in the ſoul. *A Chriſtian*, ſays he, *is of no ſect, and yet in every ſect*; a Truth which all ſects, as ſuch, will diſlike; and therefore a Truth equally wanted to be known, and equally beneficial to all ſects. For the chief

hurt of a ſect lies in this, that it takes itſelf to be neceſſary to the Truth; whereas the Truth is only then found, when it is known to be of no ſect, but as free and univerſal as the goodneſs of God, and as common to all names and nations, as the air and light of this world.

Suffer me now, before we part, once more to repeat what I have ſo often ſaid, that you would not receive this myſtery as a ſyſtem of rational notions; nor do with it, as the world has, for the moſt part, done with the Bible, only gather opinions of reaſon and ſpeculation from it. For it opens no depth of nature or grace, but to help you to the heart and ſpirit of the returning prodigal ſon, and to ſhow you the blindneſs and vanity of reaſons and opinions; and that Truth can have no poſſible entrance into you, but ſo far as you die to your earthly nature. The Goſpel ſaith all this to you in the plaineſt words, and the myſtery only ſhows you, that the whole ſyſtem of the univerſe ſaith the ſame thing. To be a true ſtudent or diſciple of the myſtery, is to be a diſciple of Chriſt; for it calls you to nothing but to the plain letter of the Goſpel: and where-ever it enters, either into the height or depth of Nature, it is only to confirm the Truth of theſe words of *Chriſt*;

Chriſt; viz. He that followeth not me, walketh in darkneſs: and *Unleſs a man deny himſelf, and forſake all that he hath, he cannot be my diſciple.* This is the philoſophy opened in this myſtery. It is not to lead you after itſelf; but to compel you, by every Truth of Nature, to turn to *Chriſt*, as the one Way, the one Truth, the one Life and Salvation of the Soul; not as notionally apprehended, or hiſtorically known; but as experimentally found, living, ſpeaking, and working, in your ſoul. Read as long or as much as you will of this myſtery, it is all labour loſt, if you intend any thing elſe by it, or would be any thing elſe from it, but a man dead to this world, that you may live unto God through *Chriſt Jeſus*, in the power of Faith, and the Spirit of Prayer. With theſe words upon our minds, my friends, let us now end this converſation.

The End of the Third DIALOGUE.

F I N I S.